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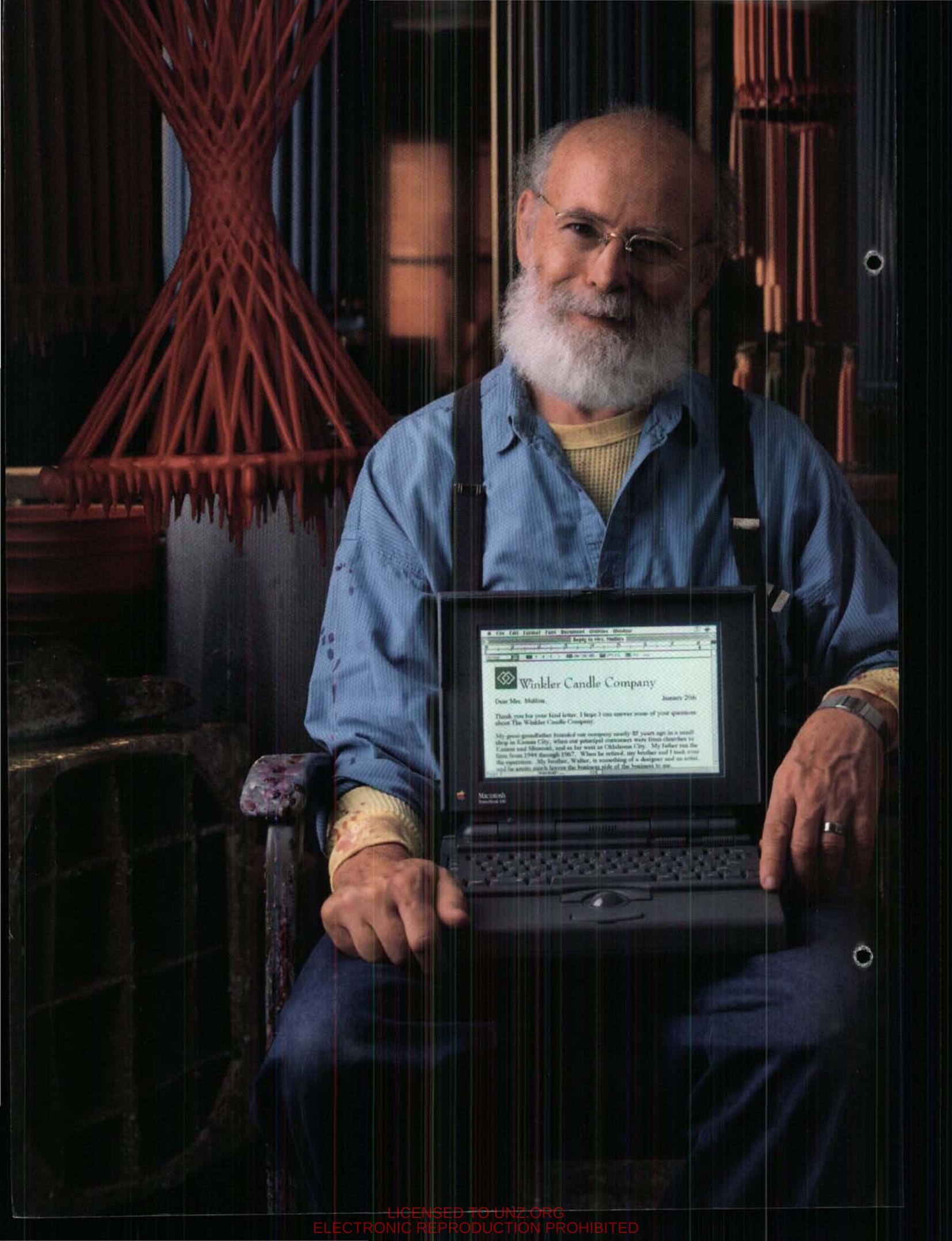
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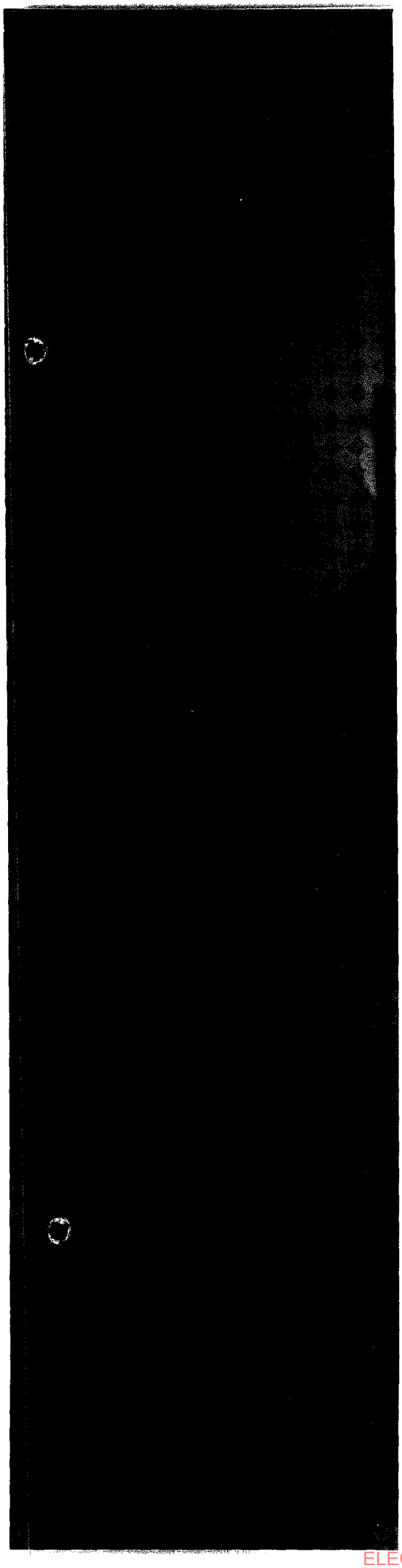

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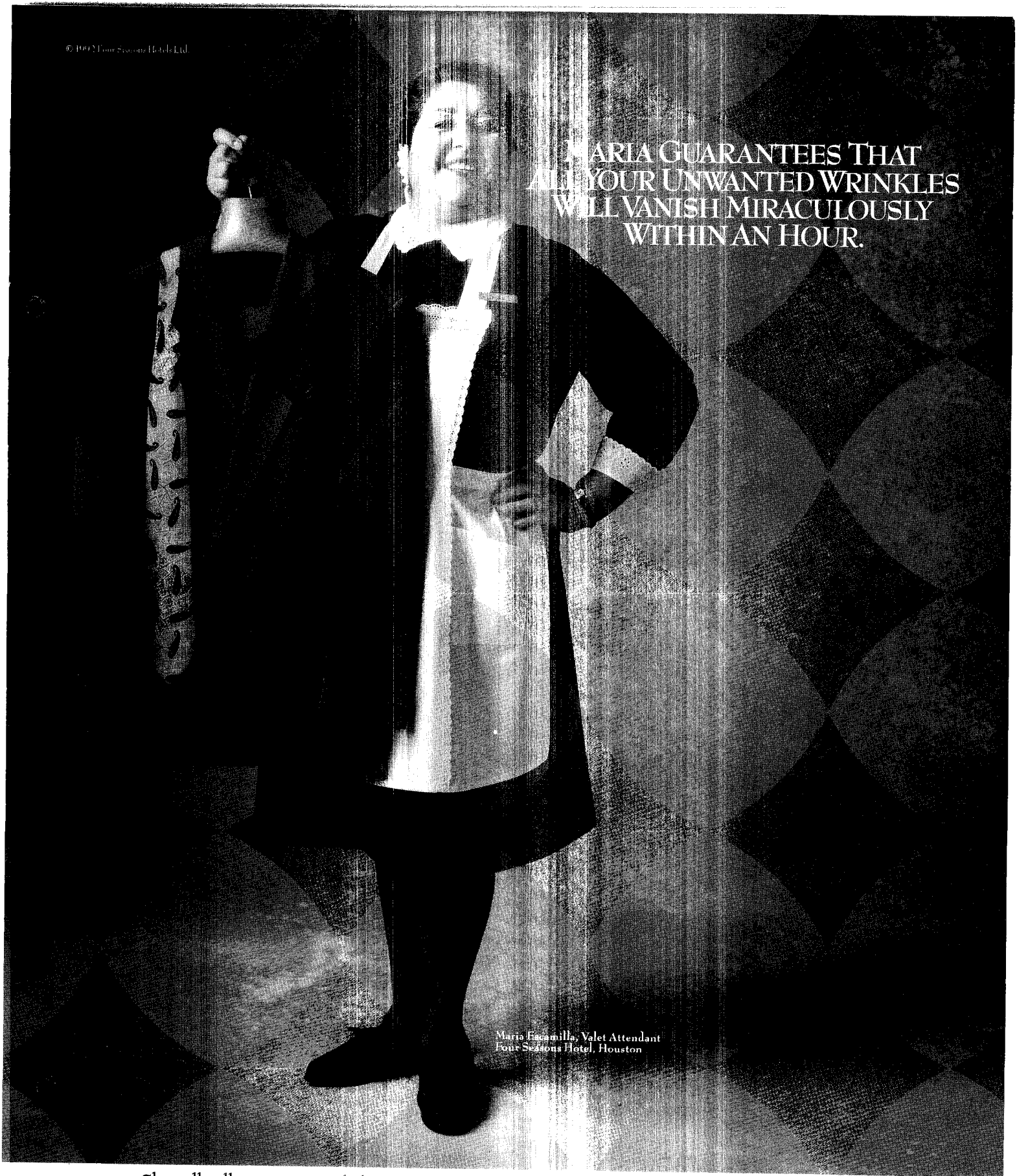

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

WHEN that longest-running long run, "The Fantasticks," receives a special Tony award on May 31, few people will cheer louder than the actor George Curley. Few people, you see, have showed up onstage at the show's downtown outpost, the Sullivan Street Playhouse, in as many years as he has (five hundred and seventy-three performances, the last one in 1990). Few people, apart from Tom Jones (book and lyrics), Harvey Schmidt (music), and Lore Noto (producer), were as closely involved in the show's well-known early history. (After opening on May 3, 1960, the show nearly closed; a combination of factors, including a successful summer transfer to East Hampton, kept it going.) And, perhaps most important to Mr. Curley's continued well-being these past thirty-two years, only a handful of people have been more directly tied to the show's financial success than he has been. The sixty-nine-year-old actor was an original backer.

Ellen Greene and Jonathan Hadary in "Weird Romance"

"I always thought actors should invest in their own business," he told us the other day. "So when I was asked if I wanted to put a little money in the show, I said, 'Well, what would one per cent be?' It turned out that a one-per-cent investment was three hundred and thirty dollars. So I took that much out of the bank—it was more than half my savings at the time—and that was that."

Mr. Curley, who at the time was working as stage manager at the night club Upstairs at the Downstairs, where Messrs. Jones and Schmidt sometimes tried out their new sketches, asked if he might also perform in the show. Initially, he says, he was discouraged; in those days, apparently, some people thought it unseemly for backers to get in on the act. But he persisted in his inquiries, eventually landing the show's smallest role, the Cockney Indian, which he played both on Sullivan Street and around the country. At first, his pay for the acting work was only forty-five dollars a week, but once the show went into profit, in 1961, and an album was cut and sheet music started selling and every high-school chorus in America began singing "Try to Remember," the show began providing other dividends. As of his last statement, Mr. Curley's one-per-cent investment had yielded $49,591.33. "Those checks have paid my rent on more than one occasion," he says.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27			

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

DREAM OF A COMMON LANGUAGE—The Women's Project presents a play by Heather McDonald. Preview on May 19. Opens May 20 at 8. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 873-3767.)

THE EXTRA MAN—A new play by Richard Greenberg, featuring Adam Arkin, Boyd Gaines, Laila Robins, and John Slattery. Opens May 19 at 8. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

HAUPTMANN—A play by John Logan about Bruno Richard Hauptmann, with Denis O'Hare in the title role. Recently seen at the Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago. In previews. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

MACBETH—John Bolger and Cecil Hoffmann star in the Willow Cabin Theatre Company's production of Shakespeare's play. Opens May 18 at 8, and runs through June 7. (One Dream, 2 North Moore St., at West Broadway. 886-1889.)

THE PRICE—Hector Elizondo, Debra Mooney, Joe Spano, and Eli Wallach in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of the Arthur Miller play. Previews begin May 20. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

SALOME—Al Pacino stars as King Herod in this production of the Oscar Wilde play. Previews begin May 25. The show will run in repertory with Ira Lewis's "Chinese Coffee," which begins performances on May 28. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

SPIKE HEELS—A play by Theresa Rebeck, with Kevin Bacon, Tony Goldwyn, Saundra Santiago, and Julie White. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

WEIRD ROMANCE—Ellen Greene and Jonathan Hadary in a new science-fiction musical by Alan Brennert (book), Alan Menken (score), and David Spencer (lyrics). In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

NEW THIS SEASON

AMERICAN JEWISH THEATRE—A double bill: ANGEL OF DEATH, by Charlie Schulman, and BIG AL, by Bryan Goluboff. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes May 24.)

BEAU JEST—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

THE BEST OF FORBIDDEN BROADWAY—This tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running, ever-fluctuating musical revue is, as one might expect, a treat. There is some new material, but our favorite sequences are still the spoof of "M. Butterfly" and the "Speed-the-Plow" number, "Madonna's Brain," in which David Mamet and Ron Silver try to teach Madonna to act and she ends up tearing off most of her clothes. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

BLOOD WEDDING—Federico García Lorca's play is all but lost in a medley of clicking heels and empty recitations. The avant-garde runs rampant for ninety unbroken, torpid minutes. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes May 31.)

CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (12/23/91) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

CIRCLE REPERTORY COMPANY—The final play of the season is EMPTY HEARTS, a courtroom drama written and directed by John Bishop. With Mel Harris and Cotter Smith. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. As staged by Daniel Sullivan, with an ace cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch, the play does what "Jake's Women" and "Dancing at Lughnasa" would probably do if their authors were, respectively, more sophisticated and less sentimental. Grab this one. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CRAZY FOR YOU—Lightly based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCING AT LUGHNASA—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the Irish memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN—Mike Nichols' Americanized version of Ariel Dorfman's play (in which Juliet Stevenson took London by storm last year) is a sad disappointment. The play, which is set in "a country that is probably Chile" and concerns a woman's attempt to punish the man she holds responsible for torturing her in captivity fifteen years before, is anything but subtle, and Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman are all grossly miscast. (3/30/92) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

EATING RAOUL—Paul Bartel wrote the book for this witless, tasteless, and embarrassing musical adaptation of his 1982 movie. The score is by Jed Feuer, and the lyrics are by Boyd Graham. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

THE END OF THE DAY—Jon Robin Baitz's new play (about an expatriate Brit physician trying to find his moral center in Southern California) has to be better and more interesting than this production makes it seem. The cast includes such fine actors as Roger Rees and Nancy Marchand, but, under Mark Lamos's sledgehammer direction, anything that there might be of subtlety or complexity in the play is swamped by performances that strive for caricature of the broadest and most banal kind. (4/20/92) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes May 24.)

ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE—The annual one-act festival. Series B, through May 24: Plays by Jack Agueros, Bryan Goluboff, Percy Granger, Joyce Carol Oates, and Jon Shirota.... ¶ Series C, May 27-June 7: Works by Lise Erlich, J. e Franklin, Frank D. Gilroy, Oyamo, and Stuart Spencer. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405.)

FAIRY BONES—Pan Asian Repertory Theatre offers two one-act plays by Laurence Yep. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes May 23.)

FALSETTOS—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. We've never understood the appeal of William Finn's "Marvin" trilogy. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. To us, though, it has always seemed like banality set to music: shallow, unlikable

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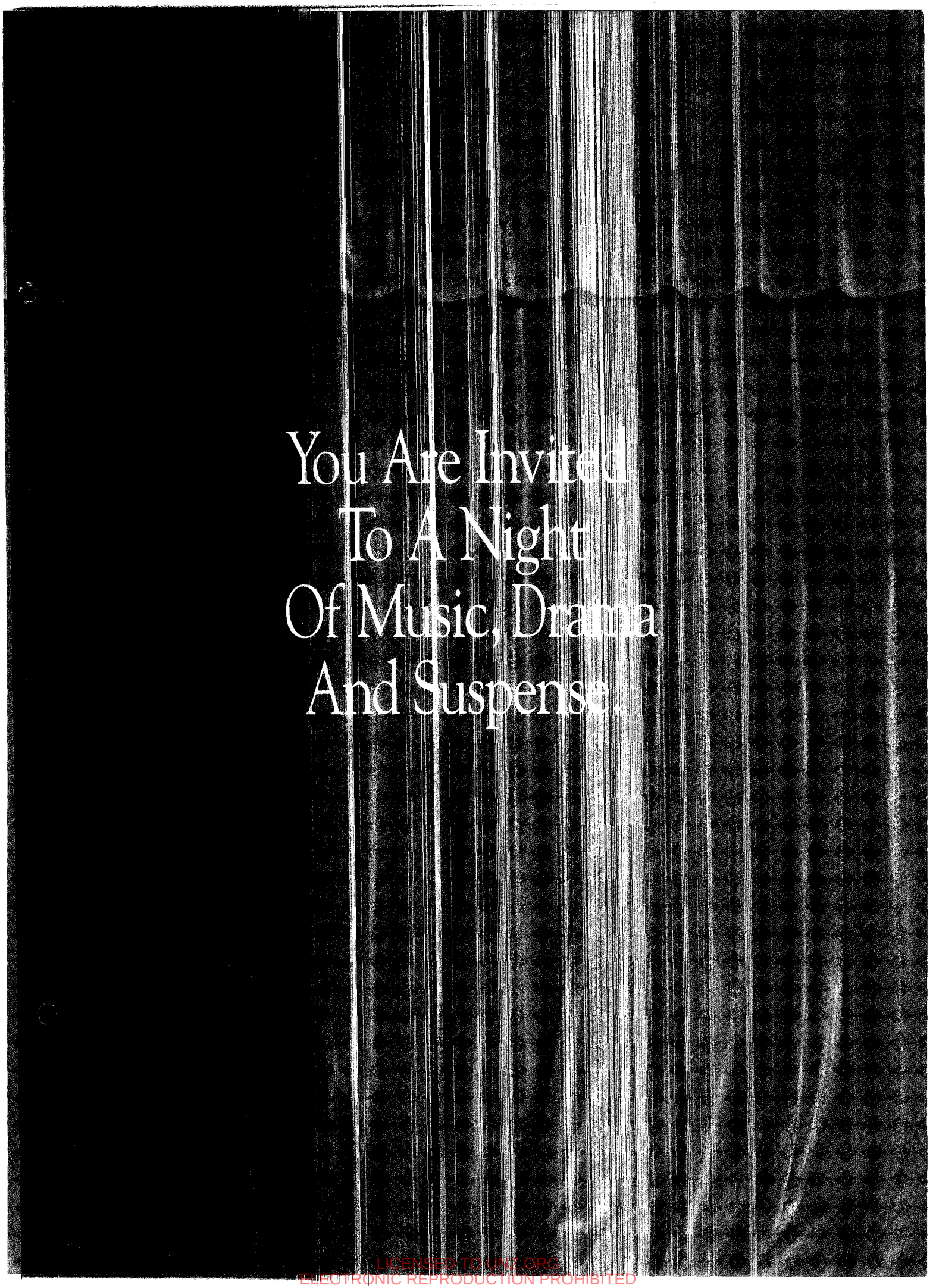

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- Crazy for You
- Falsettos
- Five Guys Named Moe
- Jelly's Last Jam

BEST ACTRESS IN A PLAY

- Jane Alexander
  The Visit
- Stockard Channing
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- Glenn Close
  Death and the Maiden
- Judith Ivey
  Park Your Car in Harvard Yard

BEST ACTOR IN A PLAY

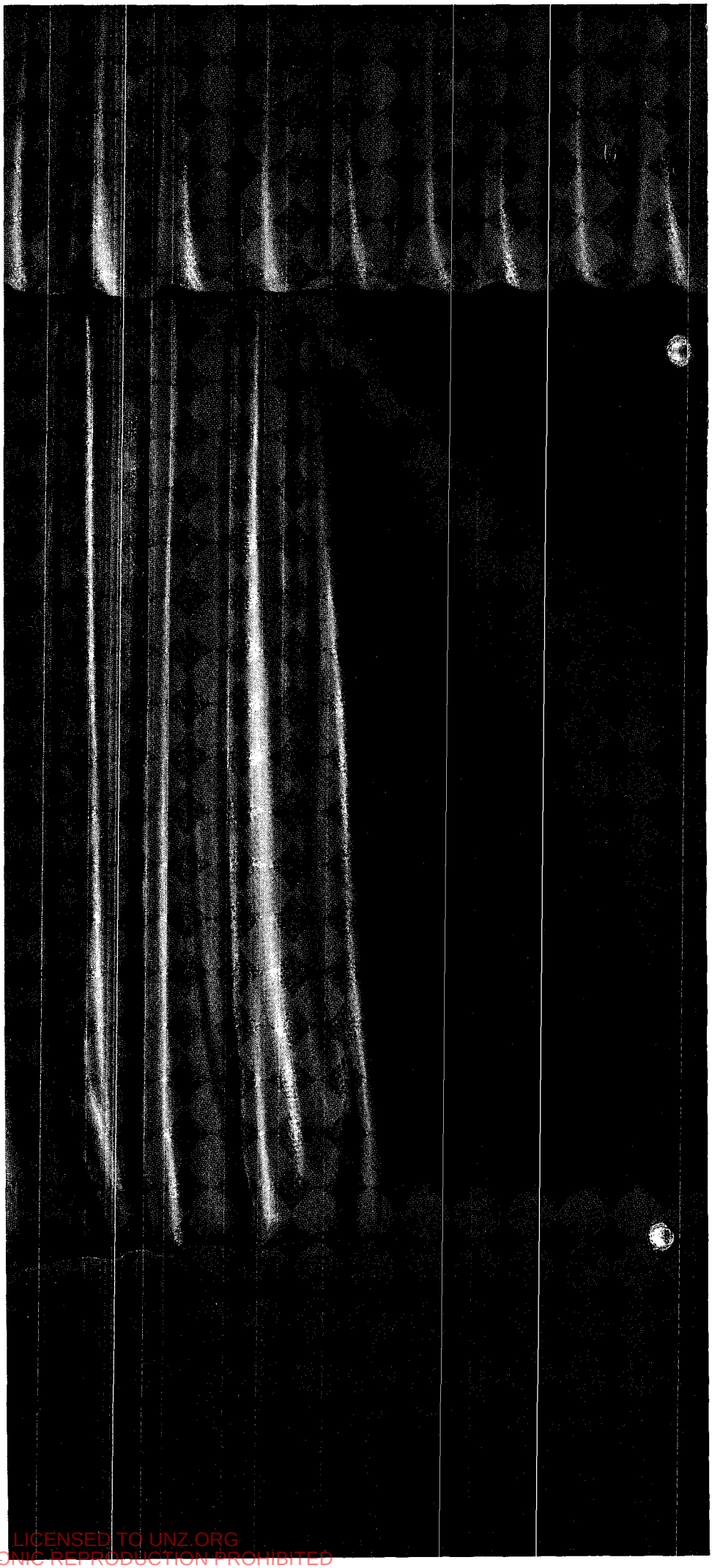
- Alan Alda
  Jake's Women
- Alec Baldwin
  A Streetcar Named Desire
- Brian Bedford
  Two Shakespearean Actors
- Judd Hirsch
  Conversations with My Father

BEST ACTRESS/MUSICAL

- Jodi Benson
  Crazy For You
- Josie De Guzman
  Guys and Dolls
- Sophie Hayden
  The Most Happy Fella
- Faith Prince
  Guys and Dolls

BEST ACTOR/MUSICAL

- Harry Groener
  Crazy For You
- Gregory Hines
  Jelly's Last Jam
- Nathan Lane
  Guys and Dolls
- Michael Rupert
  Falsettos



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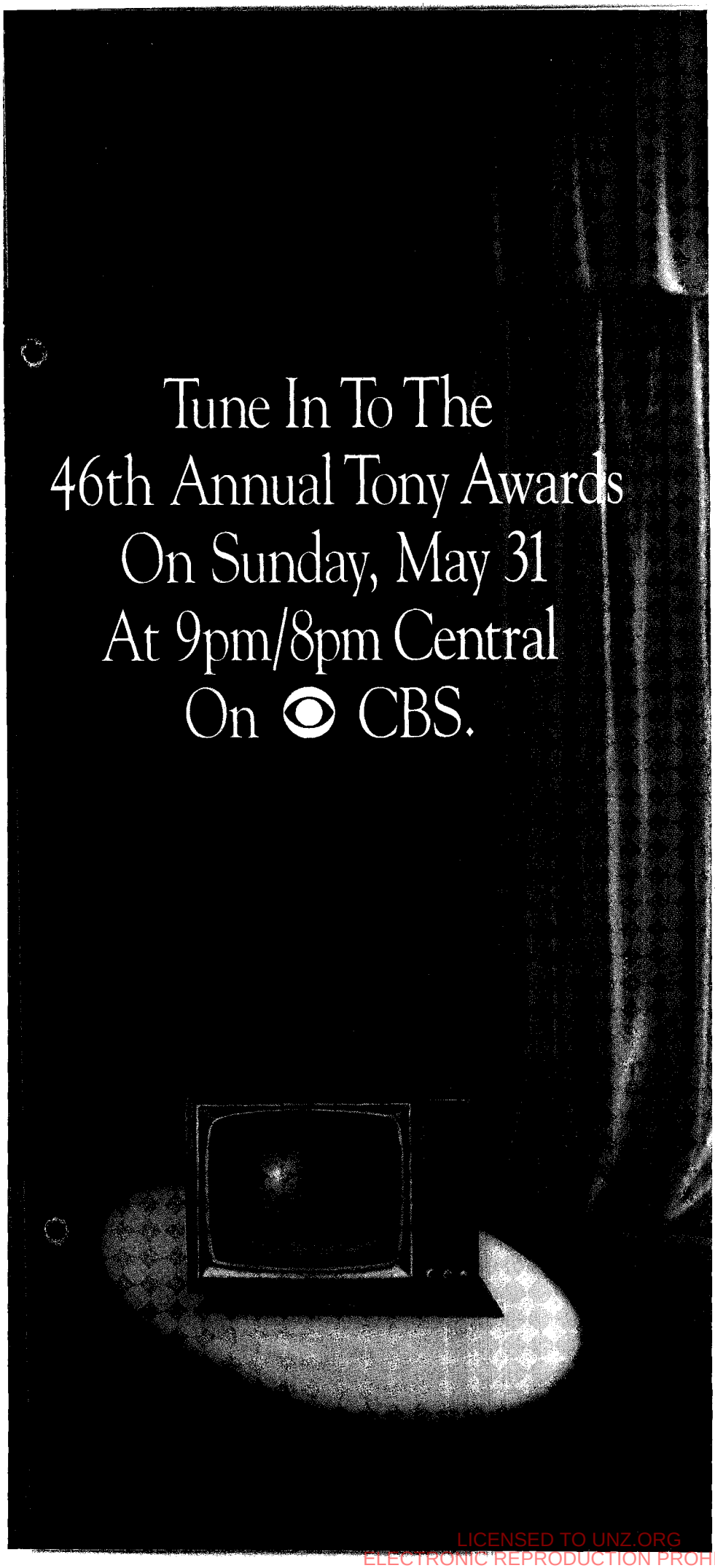

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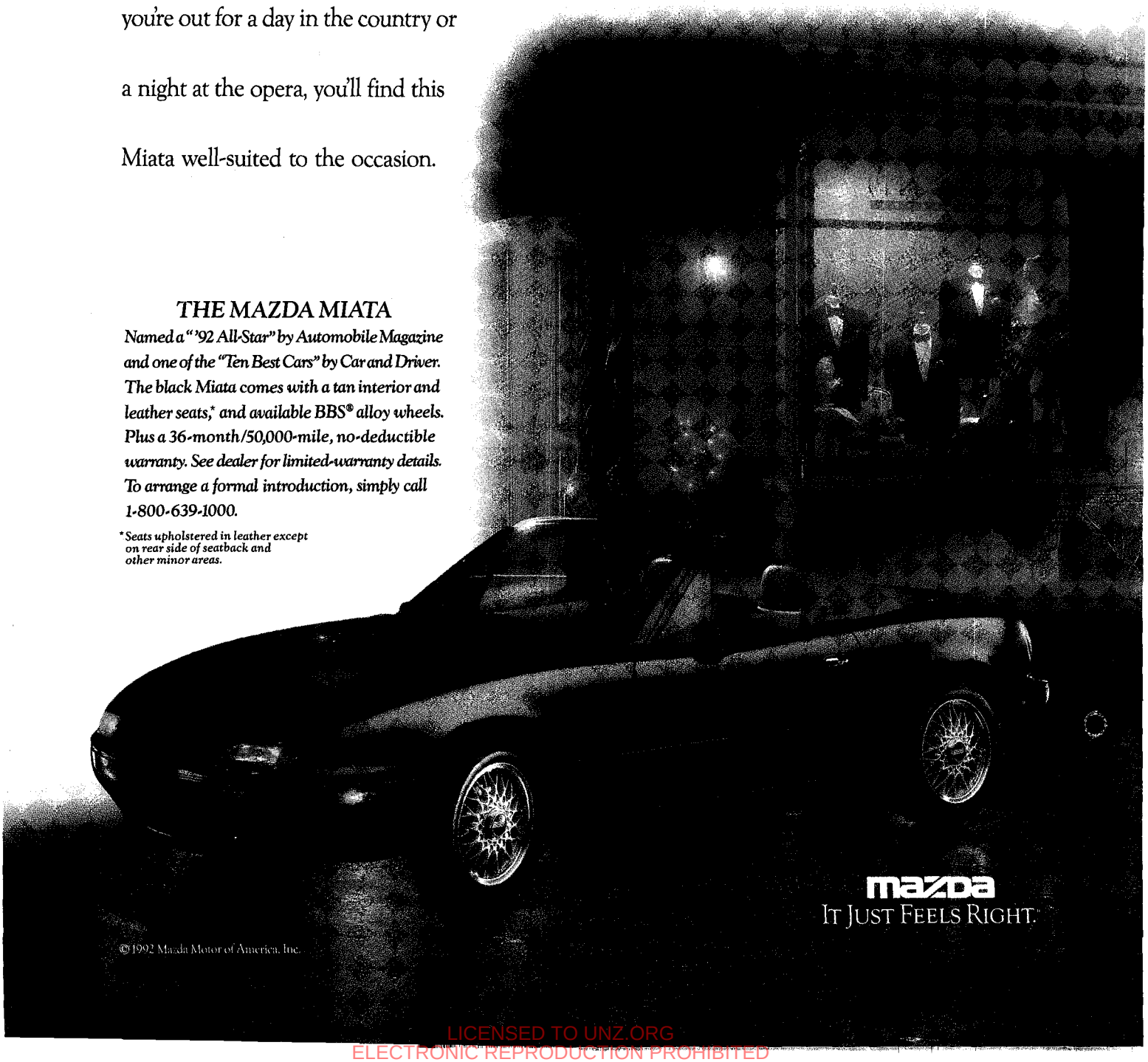

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. (5/11/92) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities—Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman show. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Five Guys Named Moe—The guys are black dancers and singers of extraordinary ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry and stimulating evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Get Used to It—A new gay musical by Tom Wilson Weinberg. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 869-3530. Closes May 31.)

Guys and Dolls—A perfect production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother—An adaptation of a novella by Gabriel García Márquez; directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Performed in Spanish; simultaneous-English-translation sets are available. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Jake's Women—Alan Alda is at his genial best in the new Neil Simon. The play, about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present, is pretty much what you'd expect: some funny lines and a lot of phony dialogue. It's predictable, banal, and contrived, but at least it showcases a fine cast of actresses that includes Kate Burton, Helen Shaver, and Joyce Van Patten. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting, in rotating repertory, Samuel Beckett's **Endgame** and a triple bill of one-acts by Václav Havel: **Audience, Unveiling,** and **Protest.** (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Jelly's Last Jam—A celebration of the music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delineation of Morton himself. The show, an original if ever there was one, was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savion Glover, who plays the character as a young man, is worthy of him, which is saying a lot. Also present are Keith David, Tonya Pinkins, Wayne Mathis, and Mary Bond Davis. Luther Henderson has adapted Morton's music and offered some music of his own; the smart lyrics were written by Susan Birkenhead; and Hope Clark was the inventive choreographer. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Julie Halston's Lifetime of Comedy—For up-to-the-minute coverage of what it is like to be "divorced, over thirty, hormonally imbalanced," you can't do better than the wit and wisdom of this multitalented actress-comedienne-sage. She's a little like Joan Rivers, a little like Joan Collins, and a little like St. Joan. Also a little like ZaSu Pitts. Among our favorite moments in this autobiographical show are the story of events leading up to Miss Halston's tragic divorce, the visit to the breast doctor, and the ritual reading and textual analysis of the *Times* wedding announcements. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Closes June 7.)

Lotto (Experience the Dream)—A comedy by Cliff Roquemore. (Heckscher, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 369-6500.)

Man of La Mancha—The granddaddy of all junk musicals. This road-show revival, starring Sheena Easton and Raul Julia, is in every respect adequate to the occasion. Miss Easton is not the most expressive actress in the world, but then Mr. Julia is not the most accomplished singer. Tony Martinez, who plays Sancho, recently celebrated his two-thousandth performance in the role—and it shows. (5/11/92) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering young man. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist, David Petrarca the director. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Most Happy Fella—This is one musical we think the world could be without and feel no sorrow. The story of a girl forced to content herself with some old duffer because some other old duffer wanted to teach everyone a lesson about making do with what life has to offer, it's pseudo opera superimposed on pseudo Americana. As for Gerald Gutierrez's Goodspeed Opera production, it's your basic slightly-better-than-average dinner-theatre revival. What's the rumpus? (2/24/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Real Live Brady Bunch—Episodes from the acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Ruthless!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. Personally, she gave us the pip. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

Sight Unseen—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. With Dennis Boutsikaris, Jon De Vries, Deborah Hedwall, and Laura Linney. (2/3/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

A Small Family Business—This cynical comedy is not the strongest of Alan Ayckbourn's plays, but there's a lot of fun in it all the same. With Brian Murray as an almost incorruptible executive and Anthony Heald as a ditto private investigator. (5/11/92) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Streetcar Named Desire—Gregory Mosher's revival, with Jessica Lange in the role of Blanche DuBois, plays like a parody. It features a cuddly, avuncular Stanley (Alec Baldwin), a Stella (Amy Madigan) straight out of a Carol Burnett skit, and a lot of embarrassing staging. Miss Lange's acting is all "for the camera." One feels that she is trying to rescue the role of Blanche from decades' worth of assumptions about it but hasn't had much help or guidance from her director. (4/27/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Substance of Fire—Jon Robin Baitz's play about an intransigent publisher at odds with his grown children, having moved from Playwrights Horizons, seems stronger than ever in this more formal theatre. The remarkable Ron Rifkin continues in the leading role, and he is ably supported by the members of the company—Patrick Breen, Cordelia Richards, Jon Tenney, and Maria Tucci. Starting may 26, Mr. Breen replaces Mr. Tenney, and John Benjamin Hickey takes Mr. Breen's former role. (3/9/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Sunset Gang—A musical by Warren Adler and L. Russell Brown, which is set in a Florida retirement community. With Irving Burton, Chevi Colton, Shifra Lerer, Sheila Smith, Alfred Toigo, and Gene Varrone. (Jewish Repertory Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 505-2667. Closes May 24.)

Tone Clusters—John Nacco and Black-Eyed Susan star in the New York première of a play by Joyce Carol Oates. Julian Webber directed. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St., between Broadway and Church St. Closes June 7. For reservations, call 869-3530.)

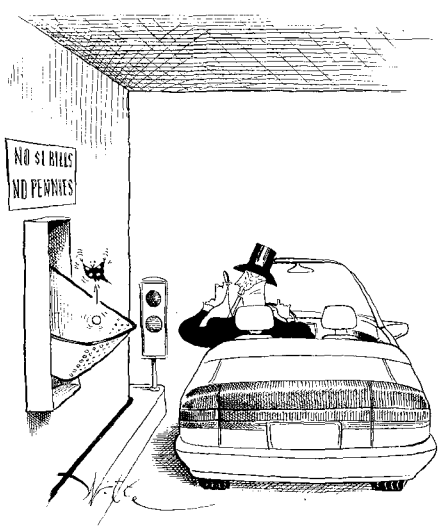
Tubes—A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

Two Trains Running—August Wilson's latest, set in a Pittsburgh luncheonette in 1969, is one of those plays in which all the performances seem to be groping hotly after Tony nominations and everything is freighted with Meaning. (4/27/92) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Zora Neale Hurston—Laurence Holder's play about the author of "Their Eyes Were Watching God," among other works. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

LONG RUNS

Cats: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.)... **The Fantasticks:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirty-second birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.)... **Forever Plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)... **Lips Together, Teeth Apart:** Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)... **Lost in Yonkers:** This family melodrama by Neil Simon, set in Yonkers during the Second World War, is about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)... **Les Misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **Miss Saigon:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)... **Nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)... **Pageant:** A musical spoof of beauty contests. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)... **Perfect Crime:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.)... **The Phantom of the Opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **The Secret Garden:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **Song of Singapore:** A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)... **Tony N' Tina's Wedding:** The never-ending nuptials of Anthony Angelo Nunzio and Valentina Lynne Vitale. With audience participation, as you probably know. (St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.)... **The Will Rogers Follies:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. With Mac Davis. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)



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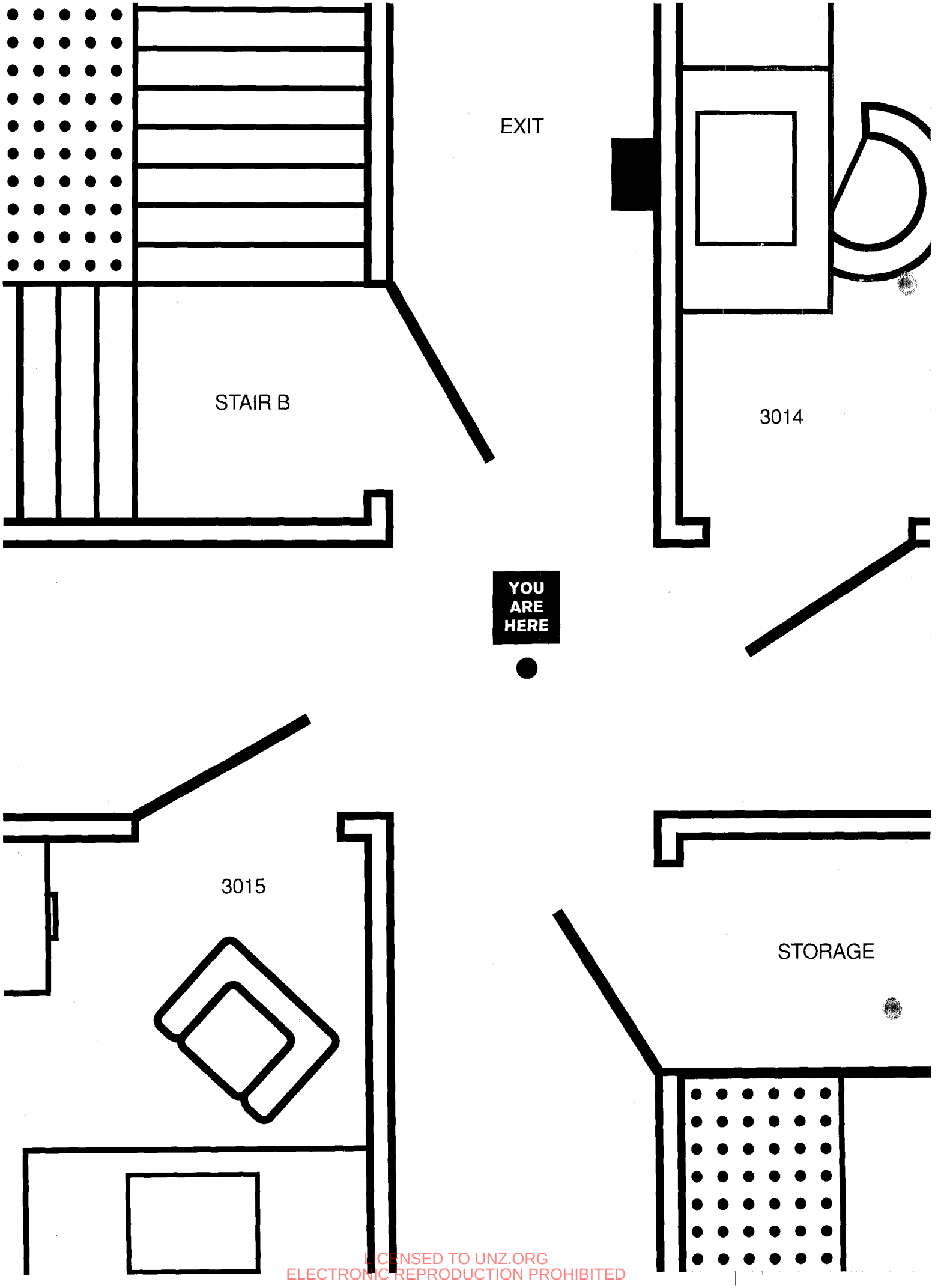

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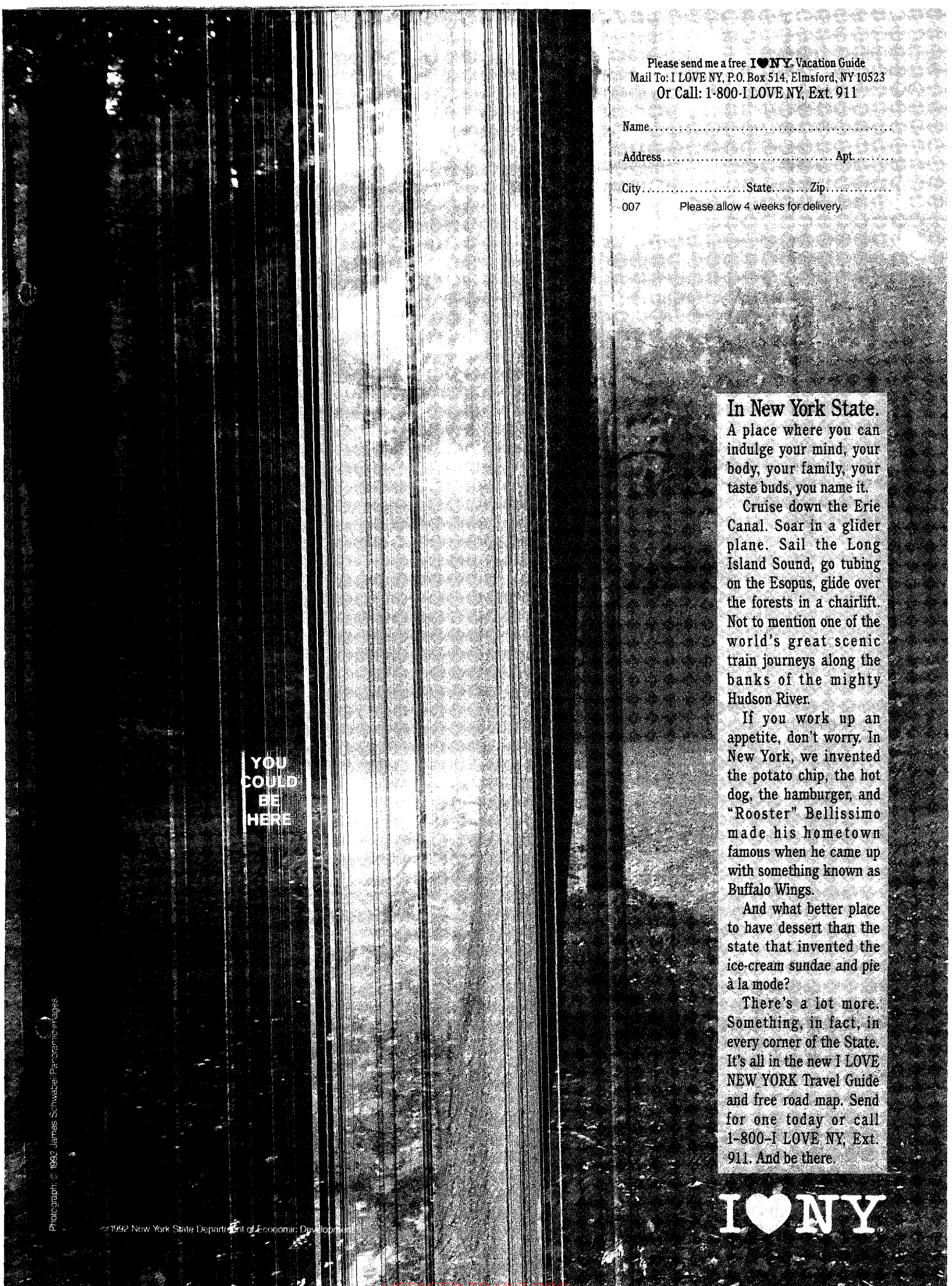

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DANCE

LAST spring, when Paloma Herrera was fifteen, she was in the midst of preparing for the workshop performances at the School of American Ballet. She had been a student in the advanced (C2) class for less than two terms, yet already she had been cast as the ballerina in Balanchine's "Raymonda Variations." Now, at sixteen, she is preparing to dance a handful of solo variations at American Ballet Theatre, where she has been a member of the corps de ballet for some seven months.

Good fortune is obviously operating on this career, but we wondered whether good judgment is, too. Paloma came to New York directly from her native Buenos Aires (where she was a student of the ballerina Olga Ferri's), and at the time of the S.A.B. workshop she was still struggling to pick up basic English. Moreover, no member of her family has been able to stay with her in New York. Academic schooling is generally the first thing to go for baby ballerinas, but in Paloma's case dance training itself was also an issue: as brilliant as she obviously was in ballet, she had been reared in a style different from that of the Americans around her, and it seemed a lot to ask of a youngster that she not only take on a professional repertoire but also change her very aesthetic while in the public eye.

One recent afternoon, we went up to the Met and had a chat with Paloma—without an interpreter. We can report that she is still the natural beauty that she was at S.A.B. Her alabaster skin is still untampered with, her glossy black hair is still knotted in a bun, the line of her legs still displays the same charismatic definition, the coördination of her head and limbs is still delicious, and her movement is still touched with soulful suspense. Watching her in class, and during a rehearsal of her Shades solo in "La Bayadère"—where she sponged up Georgina Parkinson's corrections and asked for more—we could see that she has been at work on elongating the lines of her upper body, and we were glad to observe how closely her teachers and her coaches (Irina Kolpakova among them) seem to be tracking her progress. We were also glad to see her face becoming more relaxed as she danced. She told us that she has left the residence hall where she was staying and has moved in with friends of her family. "When I got into A.B.T., some people said, 'Oh, you're very young!' " Paloma told us. "But I couldn't miss this opportunity."

Among the roles she will dance this season are the White Cat in "The Sleeping Beauty" and Amour in "Don Quixote."

New York City Ballet—May 19 at 8: "The Goldberg Variations" and "Western Symphony."... ¶ May 20 at 8: "Interplay," "A Musical Offering," and "Symphony in C."... ¶ May 21 at 8: "Apollo," "Divertimento No. 15," and "Glass Pieces."... ¶ May 22 at 8: "Serenade," "The Chairman Dances," "Interplay," and "Symphony in Three Movements."... ¶ May 23 at 2: "Apollo," "Ash," "Romeo and Juliet Pas de Deux," and "The Four Temperaments."... ¶ May 23 at 8: "Divertimento No. 15," "A Musical Offering," and "Symphony in Three Movements."... ¶ May 24 at 1: 'Serenade," "Ash," "Romeo and Juliet Pas de Deux," and "Symphony in C."... ¶ May 24 at 7: "The Goldberg Variations" and "Glass Pieces."... ¶ May 27 at 8: The Diamond Project, a week of new ballets, commences with "Reunions," "I Have My Own Room," and "Mercury." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 28.)

American Ballet Theatre—May 18 at 8: "La Bayadère."... ¶ May 19, May 21-22, and May 25, all at 8; and May 20 and May 23 at 2 and 8: "Coppélia."... ¶ May 26 at 8 and May 27 at 2 and 8: Act II of "Swan Lake," "Undertow," and Act III of "Raymonda." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 20.)

Stephen Petronio Company—Presenting "Middlesex Gorge" and a new work, "Half Wrong plus Laytext." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. May 20-24 at 8:30.)

Mark Taylor & Friends/Dance Alloy—In three premières and a revival. Presented by the Danspace Project. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 529-2318. May 21-24 at 8:30.)

"Cadence"—New dances choreographed by Mary Cochran, Sara Hook, Sandra Stone, and Karla Wolfangle. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. May 21-23 at 9. For reservations, call 924-0077.)

DanceAfrica—The fifteenth annual festival at BAM, with A Touch of Folklore and More, Kairaba West Afrikan Dance Company, Malaki Ma Kongo, the International African Islamic Ballet, and (on May 24 only) the LaRocque Bey Dance Co. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. May 23 at 2 and 8 and May 24 at 3.)

Tap Extravaganza II—The Copasetics, the Original Hoofers, the American Tap Dance Orchestra, Savion Glover, Jane Goldberg, Ted Levy, and others. The Panama Francis trio provides the music. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 24 at 7:30.)

ISO Dance—Opening performances of a one-week engagement that will run through May 31. The program: "Slow Fade to Roger," "Trazom!," and "Madame Morphose" (all New York premières), as well as "Woomen" and "Night Thoughts." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 26-27 at 8.)

Benefit—A program called "Flowers from the Volcano," with the American Ballroom Theatre; Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane & Co.; Carmen de Lavallade; David Parsons; Roberta Flack; Elisa Monte; Cynthia Gregory; dancers from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and the Martha Graham Dance Company; and many others. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. May 20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 260-0759.)

Teenage Fanclub at the Ritz

NIGHT LIFE

NOT long ago, we took in a Buffalo Tom show at the Marquee. We were standing up on the mezzanine, trying to figure out what it was that made the young band so appealing, when a friend, who was apparently reading our thoughts, leaned close and shouted, "They don't have a lot of attitude. They're just good."

That sounded about right. We've come to Buffalo Tom a bit late, having recently had the breath knocked out of us by the Boston-based group's third album, "Let Me Come Over." We have since taken a look at the band's earlier work: Buffalo Tom's first two records are bristly and unbridled, but their older songs just don't resonate the way their newer ones do. And in the crowded world of alternative guitar-rock, where everybody is more or less as loud as everybody else, songwriting is all. There's something ragged and sad about Buffalo Tom's best tunes. Singer-guitarist Bill Janovitz calls to mind Paul Westerberg, of the famously ragged and sad Replacements—not just his hoarse and plaintive voice but his beguiling way with a melody, whether the song in question is an acoustic number or an assaultive, headlong race to the finish.

Buffalo Tom is a trio. In the studio, the band tends to layer guitar tracks, and at the Marquee some of the texture and subtlety of their tunes was, of necessity, lost. What one got was the band's energy and a somewhat stark tour of their songwriting catalogue—a tour we'd take anytime.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—A quirky, endearing Village watering hole, perpetually decorated for the holidays—all of them. The musicians work in the back of the room, in a well ringed by a bar—a setup that seems to bring out the latent show-biz tendencies in some of the bar's patrons. Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy, Fridays and Saturdays to Mabel Godwin, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band. Music from nine-thirty.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—The Ballroom is smart and chic, and looks even more so in this colorless neighborhood. Storyteller **Donna Blue Lachman** is currently offering a program titled "Dancing on the White House Lawn," with shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. **Blossom Dearie** is in the midst of an open-ended stint, performing Fridays and Saturdays at six-thirty and Sundays at three.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy, two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. The schedule: **Lynn Arriale's** trio on May 20; the **Grace Testani** quartet on May 21; and **Jaki Byard's** three-some May 22-23. Music from nine. Dining.

Bitter End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—For the price of a drink or two, you can catch a handful of bands here any night of the week. (The cover charge is mostly a formality—walk along Bleecker Street and you're sure to have a free pass handed to you.) In the old days, as a mural behind the bar attests, the club hosted the likes of Bob Dylan, Linda

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Ronstadt, and Joni Mitchell. Now you're not likely to recognize anyone onstage unless you went to high school with them. Music from eight Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine on Fridays and Saturdays.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the rest room into something of a steeplechase. **Dr. John and the New Island Social and Pleasure Club** are here May 19-24; **Nancy Wilson** begins an engagement on May 26. First set at nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—There's been more and more talk about the songwriter sessions that radio personality **Vin Scelsa** hosts here every so often. The performances are billed "In Their Own Words." (The next installment is scheduled for May 21, at seven-thirty and ten-thirty.) Scelsa's shows are loose, informal bull sessions in which songwriters sit around playing tunes they've written—or wish they'd written—and holding forth about their craft. May 22-23 belongs to **Buster Poindexter and the Banshees of Blue;** on May 26, **Charlie Rich** performs; and folksinger **Phranc** turns up on May 27. Shows are usually at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar in the heart of N.Y.U. country. It's advisable to get all your talking done between sets, because, once the first chord is struck, the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. The **Nestor Torres** quartet is here through May 23. Music from ten. Dining.

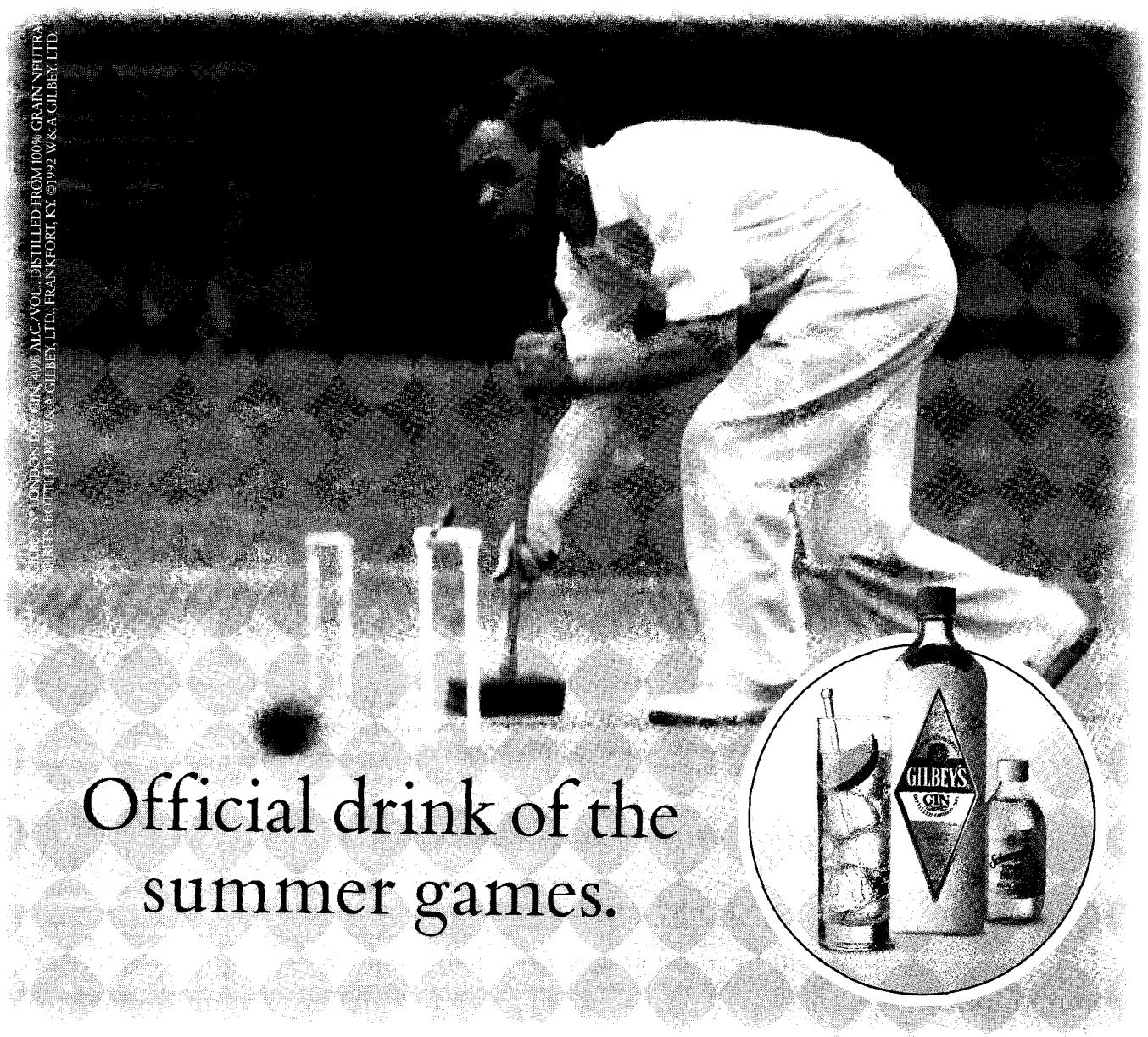
Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times.* There's no stage per se, but bohemian musicians gather around a piano and work up some nice, wistful sets while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. Sin-é means "that's it" in Gaelic and is *not* Sinéad O'Connor's nickname. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is once again home to **Bobby Short.** Mr. Short, who is accompanied by a bassist and a drummer, commands the room like a jovial headmaster. He has trouble sitting still: he keeps rising from the piano bench to snap his fingers, emphasize a lyric, or lean forward and address the audience. His selections are uniformly witty and sly. Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Barbara Carroll** presides at the piano. Carroll's sets, which are usually equal parts jazz and cabaret, include songs by Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Dizzy Gillespie, and Billy Strayhorn, along with some of her own. Music from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (255-7373)—A club that features "only Chicago-area blues artists working with their regular Chicago blues bands." This concept may not appeal to New York blues artists, but it could save local blues fans a trip to the Midwest. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—Jazz clubs aren't known for their romantic atmosphere, but Condon's at least tries. It's a low-ceilinged basement establishment, with lemon walls and abundant candlelight. The **David Murray** big band is here May 19-24. Murray, an influential, free-jazz-leaning tenor saxophonist with a combustive attack, was a co-founder of the World Saxophone Quartet, and his engagements here usually have critics and aficionados dusting off their prayer mats. Music at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one on Fridays and Saturdays.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment cen-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ter. The cheery white downstairs bar has French windows giving on to the bustle of Seventh Avenue, but the real clamor is indoors. Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. Pop standards are sung/shouted, usually with altered, risqué lyrics; wisecracks are fired across the room; and everyone laughs too hard. Upstairs there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—The seating arrangements in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement make flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. The fiery tenor saxophonist **GEORGE COLEMAN** leads a quartet here as of May 19; his sidemen will vary. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side jazz room, one steep flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly. **ROY MERIWETHER'S** trio claims May 21; **JUDY BARNETT'S** quintet is in action on May 22; and the **THOMAS CHAPIN** quartet works out on May 23. Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

JUDYS', 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—An intimate, burgundy-walled *boîte* attached to the Iroquois Hotel. In the front room, which is decorated with photos of famous Judys—and of the famous daughter of a famous Judy—a pianist keeps the happy-hour barbirds occupied. In the dining room, vocalists work out at nine Mondays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is an airy, good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. Pianist **RONNY WHYTE** and bassist **FRANK TATE** are in swing May 20-23; pianist **DON BENNETT** performs solo from May 27. Music from nine-forty-five.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **LEE KONITZ** is here May 21-23; **GARY LUCAS** comes in on May 24; and **NORA YORK** performs on May 26. **KING MISSILE,** who will be here on May 27, recently released their first major-label album, a bizarre and hilarious outing titled "The Way to Salvation." The band is fronted by John S. Hall, a performance-artist type whose vocals are, for the most part, nasty political monologues with titles like "To Walk Among the Pigs." Music after nine.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but perhaps a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. But the club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too. Show times vary. Dining.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars, and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of post-collegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drink concoctions lend the place a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A plain blue back room whose far wall is decorated with round things: a Frisbee, some singles, a drum head, and the woofer from a speaker cabinet, to name a few. The beer of choice here is Rolling Rock—by a landslide—and the crowd may make you feel as if you have a midterm to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **FIREHOSE,** the reincarnation of the seminal California punk band the Minutemen, performs on May 20. Nowadays, their songs usually exceed a minute in length, but the group is as jumpy as ever, fitfully blending punk, funk, and jazz. The **CHICKASAW MUDD PUPPIES** are here on May 23, and the **MEKONS** play a two-night stand May 25-26. The Mekons are longtime critical and cult favorites who have never managed to reach a mass audience. This Leeds band presents itself as a cross between a revolutionary commune and a seminar on itself, all of which would be pretty awful if these survivors from the days of punk didn't play such marvellous, haunting music. Shows at ten on Thursdays, and at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. Jelly Roll Morton,

BOUNCER

If you'd like to stretch your limbs without expending too much sweat, you might try the new Bankshot court at Wollman Rink in Central Park. Described with no false modesty by its inventor, Rabbi Reeve Brenner, as "a paradigm shift in the world of sports," Bankshot is a derivative of basketball that consists of a couple of dozen separate stations, each of which incorporates basketball's traditional pole, backboard, and hoop. The major difference lies in the colorful fibreglass backboards, which are bent and curved into configurations that you probably wouldn't find outside of an advanced seminar in topology. As you progress through the course, the contours and arrangements of the boards grow more and more complex, and you must adjust the angle and force of your throw with greater and greater precision in order to get the ball to strike the requisite number of surfaces and—fat chance!—go through the net. Along the way, you encounter such challenges as No. 10, the Funnel (two hoops and a clear-plastic screen); No. 16 and No. 17, the Carom Bankshot (unseen hoops nestled in all-surrounding backboards); and—the ultimate—No. 24, the Black Hole Sudden Death Tie Breaker (three ebony backboards, a hoop, and a prayer).

Rabbi Brenner, a Borough Park expatriate who played basketball for City College, came up with Bankshot after a car accident landed a cousin of his in a wheelchair. The game, he says, offers what politicians like to call "a level playing field" for the wheelchair athlete, as well as for children and the elderly. In devising the backboards, he was guided by "physics, modern art, and a lot of experimentation." Recreation aside, Bankshot can also stand on its own as sculpture, as the Israel National Museum demonstrated when they put it on display. "It's meant to have a high visual impact," Rabbi Brenner explains. "That court smiles at you even when no one's playing on it."

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currently a hot commodity on Broadway, is also the subject of a tribute here, featuring vocalist ELLIA ENGLISH and pianist TERRY WALDO. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS, Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers, and Sundays to trumpeter Frank Figuera's Slam (a ten-piece band). The Wednesday night lineup is forever changing—it's usually given over to largish ensembles. On May 20, you can catch the Bob Thosen Orchestra, and, on May 27, Ron Roullier's quintet and Tom Artin's band. Show times vary.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—Moshing, anyone? The term refers to the practice of lifting up your Doc Martened, flannel-shirt-belted neighbor and passing him or her over a sea of hands. The Ritz is one of Manhattan's premier moshing spots, though there's plenty of room for those who don't like to be touched by strangers. TEENAGE FANCLUB, who will play here on May 20, have received a tremendous amount of attention of late. In November, their second record, "Bandwagonesque," spent a month on top of the college-radio charts. Since then, the Glasgow-based outfit has found its way onto MTV and "Saturday Night Live," as well as into the pages of *Rolling Stone* as this year's "Hot Band." The band has a real gift for melodies, and there's a wistful strain beneath much of its music. Whether these more subtle qualities will come through in performance or be buried under a hail of feedback, however, is an open question. Show times vary.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. The LEW SOLOFF sextet is in action May 19-24; a trio consisting of PAUL BLEY, JIMMY GIUFFRE, and GARY PEACOCK takes charge as of May 26. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter MILES EVANS is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, located near what was once called the Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. But the sound system has been known to be temperamental. MARCIA BALL performs on May 22. Music from eight on weeknights and from eight-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—A basement jazz haunt that's been in existence since 1935. Name any major jazz artist and it's a safe bet he or she has played here. Guitarist LARRY CORYELL brings in his quartet May 19-24; trumpeter ROY HARGROVE leads a quintet as of May 26. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A relatively young club that has already managed to make a scene. Wetlands is usually thought of as a Deadhead hangout, but the club has also been the launching pad for a generation of young New York bands like Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors. Shows here can be absurdly sweaty and tight—the club seems to have a hard time turning people away—and it can be hard to get a view of the stage. Still, Wetlands is such a maze of a place that there's always some mellow corner to retire to. The CHICKASAW MUDD PUPPIES perform on May 20. Shows from ten.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. MICHAEL WEISS, BOB CRANSHAW, and LEROY WILLIAMS work out through May 23; CYNTHIA SCOTT'S trio claims May 24; and HILTON RUIZ and JIMMY ROWSER get under way on May 26. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, from nine Fridays and Saturdays, and from seven-thirty on Sundays.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

IMAGINE throwing a party for your anniversary and having somebody else's relatives show up with the champagne. It's not that the glee-seekers who turned out on a recent Saturday for the Sound Factory's third anniversary (in the current dog-eat-dog club scene, the equivalent of a Lifetime Achievement Award) didn't have spirit or the best of intentions. They eagerly waited outside, umbrella-less in the rain, for twenty minutes at 3 A.M., thirty minutes at 4 A.M., forty minutes at 5 A.M. By 8 A.M., the place was wall to wall—and those walls are real far apart.

But within those walls were only a few of the crowd that the Factory had built its reputation on. Sure, the old-timers showed up in greater numbers than usual, but there's no denying that over the past six months there has been a major change in the demographics of the best dance house in town. The Sound Factory is no longer a black club, and no longer a downtown oasis for uptown street-and-ball kids; instead, they go to Trax, where it's easier to pay the tariff and harder to get snubbed. Nor is the Sound Factory any longer a Mecca for black professionals and bridge-and-tunnel black gays, who now go to Shelter, where the ceiling may be a lot lower but where their influence is a lot higher. Blacks still go to the Factory, but whereas they used to take up three quarters of the floor, they now occupy only about a third of it. On anniversary eve, jamming in their place was a crowd almost as white as the special searchlights installed for the occasion. Strangely enough, the newcomers have done more adapting to the club than the club has to them. They're fed no silly disco, few memory-lane epiphanies. In return, there are no more clutching circles and line gropes. But the Factory is no longer a haven. Its anniversary should have been a celebration of a location unique in New York night life. Instead, it was merely an excuse for a very long party, where the fun was fuelled by unfocussed frenzy rather than by a specific musical or social source of joy. And it will stay that way until this crowd gets tired of the place and moves on. And they will.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"LESBIANS WHO KILL"—A play by Deb Margolin, with Lois Weaver and Peggy Shaw. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. May 21-23 at 10.)

DIXON PLACE—May 19 at 8: Kyle DeCamp and Dennis O'Connor. . . . ¶ May 23 at 8: Alien Comic and Friedhoffer, a magician. . . . ¶ May 24 at 7: Lenora Champagne. . . . ¶ May 27 at 8: Reno in a work in progress. (258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

P.S. 122—May 21-22 and May 24 at 8, and May 23 at 8 and 11: Hot Peaches in "Christopher Street Columbus." Through May 31. . . . ¶ May 21-24 at 9: Jennifer Miller's performance piece "Circus Amok," features Sarah Johnson, Rick Murray, Jennifer Monson, DD Dorvillier, and others. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

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ART

DENNIS HOPPER, once the counter-cultural menace of "Easy Rider," is now a seasoned hipster, and the epitome, in many circles, of post-"Day of the Locusts" cool. His current show, at the Shafrazi gallery (130 Prince Street; through May 22), part of a double bill with the rather silkier Ed Ruscha, opened, in a paparazzi's brushfire, on the Saturday before the L.A. verdict was issued. We went back for a better look on the following Thursday, as riot jitters were just starting to hit New York. Hopper, who, of course, makes movies and is also known as a photographer, is represented here by seven big new paintings—an ambitious leap. By coincidence, the theme of the paintings is gang culture in Los Angeles, and they suggest that the artist likes being where the action is—or, more precisely, where it was or will be. Each work, for example, includes a strip of photo-transferred video stills from "Colors," Hopper's recent gang-war flick, and these Rauschenbergian lineups of recycled images—generic, tawdry, tough-teens stuff—are set alongside broad painted surfaces whose grainy textures suggest stucco or concrete walls. Several of these "walls" are backgrounds for very authentic-looking graffiti—tags, vendetta symbols, and slogans that Hopper assiduously copied from pictures taken on the streets. The other surfaces look like abstract fields with daubed markings, but they, too, are appropriations, of graffiti painted over by the authorities—of anger censored. Hopper has always assumed the role of hallucinatory realist and truant. This time, however, he seemed to be playing the role of the armchair rebel—someone fiddling around with matches as the city burned.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A large gathering of paintings, drawings, and prints by the Paduan Renaissance master Andrea Mantegna. Through July 12. . . . ¶ A retrospective of black-and-white and color photographs by Helen Levitt. Through June 28. . . . ¶ Fifty works by William Harnett (1848-92), an Irish-American painter who was the father of the trompe-l'oeil school. Through June 14. . . . ¶ "Modern Design: 1890-1990" shows off the museum's holdings in twentieth-century furniture, architectural and design drawings, glass, ceramics, and other objects. . . . ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries. . . . ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." Through June 28. . . . NOTE: The museum's roof garden, planted with eight sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Antoni Tàpies in Print" presents more than a hundred lithographs, intaglio prints, and illustrated books, from the forties to the present, by the Catalan artist. Through Aug. 9. (A complementary show of prints and books is at Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St., through May 29.). . . ¶ Matthew McCaslin's "Projects" installation consists of a three-dimensional grid of metal wall studs interspersed with numerous electrical outlets, lengths of cable, five clocks, and a bare light bulb. Through June 2. . . . ¶ Félix González-Torres has also created a piece for the "Projects" series. An enlarged black-and-white image of a slept-in, empty double bed is on view here, while the same image appears on billboards throughout the city. Through June 30. . . . ¶ Photographs by Gertrude Käsebier (1852-1934), including genre scenes, allegorical compositions, and portraits of New Yorkers, Native Americans, and fellow-photographers. Through July 14. (See Photography.). . . ¶ "More than One Photography," an exhibition of sixty post-1980 works that incorporate photography in one way or another, drawn from each of the museum's six curatorial departments. Through July 19. . . . ¶ Twenty-three videotapes, mostly from the seventies, by Joan Jonas, Nam June Paik, and William Wegman. Through July 16. . . . ¶ A display of glass and ceramic tableware by Finnish designer Kaj Franck. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until early summer.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A well-framed, expertly installed, compact exhibition of recent "Pastels" by Joan Mitchell. They're beautiful: vibrant, nimble, and utterly authoritative, though seemingly unfettered. Mitchell is in peak form here. Through June 21. . . . ¶ Eighty-five works by Richard Prince, including his "re-photography," drawings, collages, silk-screen paintings, and wall reliefs. Through July 12. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Contemporary Wood Sculpture" includes works by Kenji Fujita, Jane Greengold, and Louise Nevelson, among others. Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"The Streets of Dai Fau," a show of photographs by Arnold Genthe (1869-1946) which depict San Francisco's Chinatown before 1906. Through June 30. . . . ¶ "Global Warming—Understanding the Forecast," a large exhibition developed by the museum and the Environmental Defense Fund. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—A show that documents several stages in the design of Frank Gehry's new bentwood furniture (several models of which were seen a few months ago at MOMA). Included are original drawings, prototypes, mass-production models, photo-murals, and a history of bentwood furniture. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ "A Decade of Craft" highlights works in glass and wood that the museum has recently acquired. Through July 26. . . . ¶ Three site-specific installations: Sam Gilliam's "Windows Go Orange (e.e. cummings)," Robert Kushner's "Butterflies," and Dale Chihuly's "Niijima Floats." (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—Fifty works by the colorful and prolific painter Chang Dai-chien (1899-1983). Through July 19. . . . ¶ "The Cosmic Dancer." The tenth-century Hindu bronze of Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance, is the centerpiece of this exhibition of fifty bronze, stone, and wood sculptures from India and Southeast Asia. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St.—Joseph Beuys' early-seventies aluminum-glass-and-photo panel work titled "Arena—

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where would I have got if I had been intelligent!" Through June 21. . . . ¶ Six large paintings are the centerpiece of Brice Marden's show of works inspired by the Tang-dynasty poet Cold Mountain. Through May 31. . . . ¶ On the roof, Dan Graham has created a fine urban park with glass walls, a floor of spongy asphalt tiles, and a squat glass cylinder at its center. The park is elevated above the roof as if it were afloat, and it is very pleasant to spend time up there, especially in the nearby coffee bar/video lounge. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Japanese Folk Art: A Triumph of Simplicity" features more than eighty sculptures, signs, baskets, masks, and other objects from the late fourteenth century to the early twentieth. Through July 2. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Bridges and Boundaries: African-Americans and American Jews." This show—comprising three hundred and fifty art works, photographs, and documents—explores the complex relationship of coöperation and tension between the two groups. Through July 19. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Sketching at Home and Abroad," more than a hundred British landscape drawings and watercolors—from the literal to the lyrical—by Turner, Constable, Wilson, Gainsborough, and others. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ Puss in Boots, the Master Cat, is the subject of an exhibition that spans three hundred years' worth of illustrations, beginning with Charles Perrault's original manuscript of Mother Goose stories. Through Aug. 9. . . . ¶ A show that examines, through illustrated treatises, the development of the English landscape garden. Through Aug. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5, Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Walt Whitman and New York." The Long Island-born Brooklynite is celebrated in a show that juxtaposes prose and poetry with nineteenth-century paintings, prints, and photographs. Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre." A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from nearly seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. First seen in New York at the I.B.M. Gallery last summer. . . . ¶ "A World Together" is a show of seventeen paintings and one installation by three Korean artists: Man Ik Lee, of Seoul; Chun Yong Oh, of Paris; and Choong Sup Lim, of New York. Through June 28. . . . ¶ An exhibition of fifty paintings, watercolors, and lithographs by the Dutch artist Adriaan Lubbers (1892-1954), whose fascination with New York City is reflected in his urban landscapes. Through July 26. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and twenty-four prints, drawings, and watercolors by the German artist Lovis Corinth (1858-1925). Through June 28. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Hail, Delirium!," a show of illustrated books and prints by Dorothea Tanning. Through July 18. (Third Floor Gallery.). . . ¶ One of the more comprehensive shows in the current crop of Walt Whitman centenary celebrations is "In Life or Death Forever": a hundred and fifty manuscripts, books, photographs, and letters culled from both the Berg and Oscar Lion collections. (Berg Exhibition Room.). . . ¶ Percy Bysshe Shelley, gifted and influential Romantic poet, also made forays into the political arena, as evidenced in the letters, manuscripts, and bank checks on view in "Shelley: Unacknowledged Legislator." Through Aug. 8. (Edna Barnes Salomon Room.). . . ¶ "On the Edge" is a show of more than two hundred black-and-white and color photographs from the covers and pages of *Vogue*. Through Aug. 1. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

P. S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City—"Slow Art: Painting in New York Now," Alanna Heiss's show of paintings by a hundred and three more or less New York-based artists, has no theme, no pretensions, no stylistic point of view, no concentration on either fame or obscurity, no axe to grind. All of this—plus the fact that most artists submitted what they clearly must have felt were strong pieces—may be why the show is so pleasant. It's an idiosyncratic and uneven "salon" exhibition that doesn't know it. No nineteenth-century airs or archly cluttered walls, either. The installations, throughout a dozen or so rooms on two floors of this big old building, are in fact surprisingly breezy—the rooms are almost underhung, believe it or not. By the end of your tour, you might find yourself wishing a few *more* artists had been included. Highlights include works by Roy Lichtenstein, Ellsworth Kelly, Alex Katz, Byron Kim, Peter Hopkins, Jane Kaplowitz, Matthew Weinstein, and Stephen Mueller. But there's so much here that one could come up with a completely different list. Through June 21. (Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—Fifty-seven paintings, drawings, and installations by the twenty-five-year-old Russian artist Sergei Bugaev "Afrika." Through June 14. . . . ¶ "Circumference," an installation of hand-blown glass objects by Robin Stanaway. Through June 14. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of fifty works by the painter Archibald J. Motley, Jr. Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Africa and the Diaspora" features nearly a hundred works from the museum's collection, dating from the fifth century to the present. Through June 7. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. They will be closed Memorial Day.)

Herbert Haseltine (1877-1962) / **William Stanley Haseltine** (1835-1900)—In and around his Paris studio, Herbert Haseltine kept horses, monkeys, dogs, ducks, roosters, exotic birds, a Syrian ram, a zebu, two lions, and a leopard, but his small sculptures are a mundane assortment—cows, horses, and pigs. At first, the works seem to be pure homespun Americana—there are enough sentimentally mimetic bronzes to satisfy the most fervid Remington enthusiast—but after a while they become endearing, especially the pigs. Many have moments of accidental modernist brilliance—the artist's name pristinely etched in the black marble bases of several tabletop statuettes, for example, or the rings of fat around the hooves of a sow. There are also several highly stylized works made in India, for the Maharaja of Nawanagar. A pair of bullocks, each carved together with its pedestal-like base out of the same block of marble, have been given the garish Hindu dignity of makeup, including stunning blue eyeliner. / William Stanley Haseltine, the father, studied at the Düsseldorf Academy and trekked throughout Europe, yet his sketches and paintings, of Bavaria, the Swiss lakes, Venice, Rome, and various picturesque spots in New England, are simply dull. Through June 5. (Hirschl and Adler, 21 E. 70th St.). . . ¶ If pedestrian landscapes are your thing, the Berry-Hill gallery, a few doors to the west, has more of Haseltine the elder; the works there are somewhat more dramatic, with an emphasis on craggy coasts. Through May 30. (11 E. 70th St.) In any case, New York's own picturesque wilderness, Central Park, is just a few more steps away.

Short List—**Roberto Aizenberg,** CDS Gallery, 76 E. 79th St. (open Sundays, noon to 3, through June 30); **Georg Baselitz,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through June 12), and Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through June 26); **Fritz Bultman,** Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. (through May 29); **James Rosenquist,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through July 11); **David Smith,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through June 27); **Richard Smith,** Feigen, 49 E. 68th St. (through June 20); **Holly Zausner** and **Robert Taplin,** Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. (through May 28).

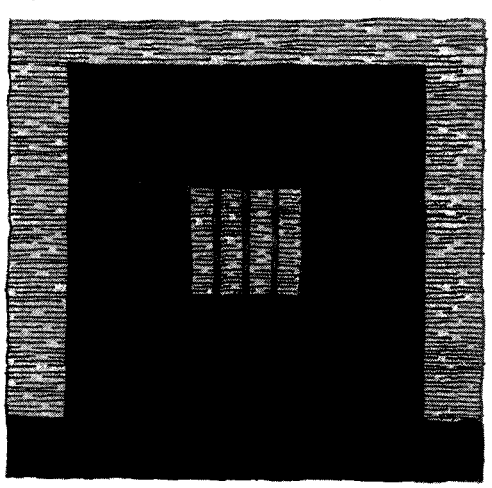
GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Shirley Jaffe—Extremely pleasant paintings, both jazzy and restrained, that look like a cross between Matisse and Stuart Davis—likable, if shallow. Through May 30. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Julian Schnabel—Two shows of recent paintings. At Pace gallery's 57th St. venue (32 E. 57th St.; through May 30), there is the 1991 "Olatz" series, a group of six large abstractions on drop cloths with grandly simple frames. Roseate and tumultuously gestural, these paintings emanate from the Rodolfo role in Schnabel's operatic repertoire; they seem to be about the freewheeling life of the studio—of "La Bohème." Their charm is at once blowsy and epicurean. The tour de force, however, is at Pace downtown (142 Greene Street; through May 23). "The End of the Summer" is a group of four dank gray tarpaulins from 1990—each roughly the size (sixteen feet square) of a studio apartment—that were distressed in Schnabel's open-air Montauk "studio." The stage is set here for a wondrous "La Tempesta."

José María Sicilia—An impressive show of milky, near-monochromatic, wax-dipped photographs of small paper sculptures: a windmill, a plane, a flattened frog, crabs, and various flora. They manage to combine painting, sculpture, photography, and collage in a most economical and satisfying way. Through May 30. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**Valerio Adami,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 6); **Avigdor Arikha** and **Magdalena Abakanowicz,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 6); **Robert Arneson** and **Luis Cruz Azaceta,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 29); **Jared French,** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through May 29); **Sonia Gechtoff,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through June 6); **Arthur Gibbons,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 29); **Sidney Goodman,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 29); **John Marin,** Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. (through May 23); **Ed Ruscha,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 13); **George Segal,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 6); **Philip Smith,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 12); **Dorothea Tanning,** Cavaliero-Navarra, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 6); **Antoni Tàpies,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (through May 29); **John Wilde,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 30).



Self-portrait by Peter Halley

GALLERIES—SoHo

Eric Bulatov / Oleg Vassiliev—This show includes a gorgeous painting by Bulatov of the broad view, at sunrise, from the window of his Moscow studio. The work has a beautiful light, as well as the sense of stability one usually associates with home. Indeed, occupying the center third of the canvas is the Russian word for "home," which is painted in a delectable Rymanesque white. But there is also a certain sense of longing to the painting, a quality made more explicit in another work, of the green Russian countryside, simply titled "Russian." The landscape is blurry, as if viewed through a rain-dappled windshield. Bulatov is one of the more cosmopolitan of contemporary Russian artists,

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ART–Cont'd

and his *mal du pays* is given greater meaning by two paintings of New York, which by contrast are emotionally flat, without center, garish in their detail. / The international exposure he has received does not seem to have affected Vassiliev's psyche at all. Many of his works consist of an apparitional image in the center of the canvas, bathed in white light and mystically surrounded by prismatic color. They are rather trite, albeit well painted. More captivating are canvases of just the prismatic light. Still more compelling is a blue-tinged grisaille of a woman walking through a park on a rainy day, on her way home from the market. In the foreground are brown leaves encircling the figure. The painting has the haunting, primal-memory quality that the other works here reach for, but without their hokey mystical overlay. Through May 30. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Ernst Caramelle—There is a quiet beauty to the work of this Austrian artist, who is little known in this country. The most impressive work is a simple, two-part geometric wall painting that incorporates the gallery's windows. It gives one the illusion that one is looking at the frescoed walls of an Umbrian villa. The artist's gentle sense of play is evident in various small paintings, on glass and paper, of related spaces that also suggest architecture. Also on view are a few purple watercolors on buff-colored cardboard, which reach back to the Bauhaus and forward to computer imaging. Through June 6. (Burgin, 130 Prince St.)

Marina Karella—Recent mixed-media works by a Greek-born artist now based in Paris and New York. East meets West again and again in this display, in which a group of ethereal, nearly Whistlerian white-on-white photo-based images of such subjects as flowers and waterfalls are joined by a series of retouched reproductions of Indian prints mounted on wood blocks. Each of these distinct groups has considerable charm, but the over-conceptualized installation, in which the Indian prints have been hung in such a way as to literally underline the white pictures, chokes things up somewhat. There are also a couple of larger diptychs in which the two themes converge more naturally, and these are more effective. Through May 22. (Z gallery, 382 West Broadway.)

Stephen Mueller—The world this artist's paintings depict is abstract, exquisitely lyric, and highly combustible. It is peopled, it seems, by incarnate deities and spirits, shapes whose identities and countless moods are expressed through utterly plangent color. And they are set against some of the most atmospheric grounds this side of Shangri-la. But there is nothing New Age or trite in works like "Proto Indo-European," with its faintly lubricious, scalloped, pink-hued central form, or "Over Yonder," with its atavistically potent, Blakean orbs. Through May 30. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Archie Rand—An amiably sloppy survey of paintings from 1967 to the present. Through May 23. (Lee, 588 Broadway.)

Charles Ray—A startling work by an artist who has a fascinating take on perception—perverse yet dignified. It consists of an eight-foot female mannequin, wearing a cobalt-blue suit worthy of a head flight attendant, who is frozen in the process of stepping off a low circular pedestal. She is perfectly proportioned, but monstrously large, which gives her a bit of a drag-queen look. Through May 23. (Feature, 484 Broome St.)

Tim Rollins + K.O.S.—It has never been entirely clear just how collaborative the artistic process has been between Rollins and his student collaborators, Kids of Survival, a confusion that was unduly sensationalized in the press last year. This exhibition, perhaps as a result of that furore, seems filled with soul-searching. Appropriately, the artists have come up with a provocative arrangement of four works that examine individuality in the face of the group. Pages from "The Red Badge of Courage" are covered with wounds, each painted by a different Kid, each a little world in the cosmos, some stunning, like Delaunays or Tantric designs, others muddied, like diseased cells. Likewise, the huge gaseous circle painted in blood on the pages of Flaubert's "The Temptation of St. Anthony" looks like something from a lab slide, or like an inchoate planet. More curious, if only for their unfamiliarity, are two blunter works—one of them consists of a painted, star-filled sky in which the stars are bits of broken glass and mirror, and the other of logs scattered on the gallery floor, each log inset with a pair of eyes based on those of a member of K.O.S. The work's provocative title, "Pinocchio," may suggest that the true relation of Rollins to his Kids' imaginations is that of Geppetto to his wooden puppet—though he can shape them, he can not bring them to life. Through June 27. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

John Virtue—Accomplished paintings in which black paint and ink have been splashed and dripped onto white grounds. At first, the works seem to be entirely abstract, but with a little sustained viewing they are clearly seen to be villages peered at through trees—a straight-faced but very bizarre twist on abstraction and representation. Through May 30. (Louver, 130 Prince St.)

Sue Williams—Williams makes fierce, disturbing paintings about misogyny and the physical abuse of women. They smack you over the head yet also seem somehow measured and considered. There are also several sculptures: one is of a pair of buttocks smashed by a baseball bat; another is of a battered woman, lying on the floor, covered with boot prints and pronouncements blaming the woman and defending her male attacker. The most haunting work is a takeoff on Richard Prince's joke paintings, which are notorious for the supposed irony of their sexism. Williams' works turn a corner where there is no room for irony, and there is only abuse. In one of the painting's images, a doctor with a *Playboy* smile holds his stethoscope to a woman's nipple; in another, a husband screws his wife's brains out while holding a gun to her head. The jokes are very unfunny, and therein lies the work's bite. Through May 30. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

John Zinsser—Beautiful two-color paintings in which the paint has been methodically streaked, squeegeed, basted, and glazed. The processes by which they were made are an explicit part of their imagery, but those works are most interesting that most strongly suggest representational subject matter—canyon walls or the sky, for instance. Zinsser has a simple yet very sophisticated sense of light. Through June 30. (Koury, 89 Greene St.)

"Masquerade (Body Double)"—The theme of this quite fashionable exhibition is abstract-surreal biology. It presents four artists' works, including several of Lucas Samaras's famous Polaroid "Photo-Transformations" from 1973-1976, as well as Cibachromes by Jeanne Dunning, a painting and two drawings by the wonderful Lari Pittman, and two recent built-up lollipop-colored paintings by Matthew Weinstein, who seems to be going through a breakthrough phase and is getting very good indeed. Through May 30. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

"Between the Sheets"—For this show, eleven artists have photo-printed or embroidered various politically charged messages on spanking new white sheets and pillowcases, some of which are displayed on real beds. Mary Beth Edelson has made her bed with sheets silk-screened with a still of a gun-toting Gena Rowlands, from her tough-gal, justice-seeking title role in "Gloria." Gloria was a great stand-tall, get-even role model, but the work's singular theme of sexual revenge seems tired. More effective are Marlene McCarty's pillows, including her "Cherry Bust Rap Quiz," and Donald Moffett's attack on the religious right, in the form of a folded white sheet resting in a dark-wood coffin, with an unrighteous slogan neatly embroidered in reverent white on the edge. In the center of the room is Carrie Mae Weems' worn, country-quilted bed, whose bedclothes are printed with the sheet music of what would ordinarily be considered an innocuous enough tune. But here the lyrics "Little red rooster, too lazy to crow" suggest a racist reading; the work constitutes a reproach in the middle of a lily-white room. Through May 23. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

"Performance, Video & Film"—Artists who show at this gallery tend to have a foot in such fields as medicine, physics, and computer technology. During regular gallery hours, videos and films—by Eleanor Antin, Liza Bear, Andrea Fraser, and Sharon Greytak, among others—can be viewed on request. In "Thanatopsis," a recent tape starring Lydia Lunch and directed by Beth B., both of whom were fixtures of the downtown scene in the late seventies, Lunch expresses despair over a world in which violence is inevitable. "Slavery is freedom and war is peace," she says in her monologue, echoing Orwell's "1984"; the piece is both soothing and depressing. In addition, the gallery is staging a series of performances (Wednesday evenings at 7 and Saturday afternoons at 4) by more outside artists. (There is no admission charge for the performances.) Through June 6. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Group Show—An exhibition of important early works, related to issues of process, by three important artists: Bruce Nauman, Dennis Oppenheim, and Richard Serra. For Oppenheim, the process is no less than a dismantling of the power of the art system, in order to show its spiritual bankruptcy; in his installation, the gallery has been reduced to the "decomposed" or pulverized materials of which it was constructed. Serra is represented by a work that marks his exit from process art—one of his earliest steel pieces, consisting of a one-by-five-by-sixteen-foot steel sheet cut in three places. For Nauman, the process is one of perception. The viewer wanders down an ever-narrowing corridor to enter an empty parallelogram-shaped space bathed in green light. As you exit the space, everything becomes tinged with a wonderful magenta, which is the complement of green. Through May 23. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

Kiki Smith

Short List—**Jennifer Bolande**, Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through June 13); **Christopher Brown**, Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through June 20); **James Brown**, Castelli, 578 Broadway (through June 6); **Shu Lea Cheang**, Exit Art, 578 Broadway (open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 8; through May 30); **Ian Davenport**, Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through June 27); **Dan Flavin**, RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway (through June 26); **George Green**, Meisel, 141 Prince St. (through May 30); **Jan Groth**, Brown, 23 Watts St. (through June 6); **Peter Halley**, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. (through June 27); **Jacqueline Humphries**, Good, 532 Broadway (through June 13); **Alfred Leslie**, Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through June [illegible]); **Glenn Ligon** (through June 6) and **Judy Pfaff** (through June 27), Protetch, 560 Broadway; **John Lindell**, Cugliani, 40 Wooster St. (through June 27); **Curtis Mitchell**, Rosen, 130 Prince St. (through June 13); **Robert Morris**, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through June 27); **Susan Rothenberg**, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through May 30); **Edwin Ruda**, Kelly, 591 Broadway (through June 23); **Harold Shapinsky**, Helander, 415 West Broadway (through May 30), and National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. (open daily, except Sundays, at noon; through June 27); **Kiki Smith**, Fawbush, 76 Grand St. (through June 3); **Jessica Stockholder**, American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster St. (through June 6); **Elyn Zimmerman**, 65 Thompson Street Gallery (through July 11).

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PHOTOGRAPHY

TWELVE photographs from Frank Gohlke's Mt. St. Helens series are on view at the Franklin Parrasch gallery (588 Broadway; through May 30), and although we would have happily looked at several dozen more, we left the exhibition feeling enriched in our understanding of his work. Gohlke's pictures are meditations on the forces of nature and "the shape of time," to use the phrase that George Kubler made famous. Gohlke began this series within months of the volcano's eruptions in 1980, and in this show you can see photographs he took between 1981 and 1990. Although the images would be perfectly at home in a traditional exhibition of American landscape photography, that's not the genre that came to mind as we stood in front of the works, interested by the information they imparted and mesmerized by their beauty. In one picture, for example, falling rocks appear as squiggles of light as they tumble down a steep slope. Unexpectedly, Gohlke's work reminded us of the earth-art photographs that Robert Smithson did in the sixties—not so much for the print quality (Gohlke's is exquisite; it was unimportant to Smithson) but because of the way both artists open up one's perspective on the relationship between the Earth and time. Natural disaster is not a new theme for Gohlke. In fact, when Mt. St. Helens erupted he had just completed a series of photographs of the Wichita Falls tornado, in Texas—and of its aftermath. Unlike most photographers who are attracted to the subjects of human and natural disaster, Gohlke isn't there to take pictures just when the headlines are hitting the papers; he follows up on his subjects for years afterward—and recovery and survival are as much a part of his view as destruction is.

GERTRUDE KÄSEBIER (1852-1934)—A small connoisseur's treat of a show, which highlights two of the strongest forces in Käsebier's vision: narrative photographs of domestic life, and portraits of her male colleagues, many of them significant figures in the history of photography—Clarence White, Edward Steichen, Baron Adolf De Meyer, and Alfred Stieglitz. And Käsebier's portraits of Native Americans have a power and a directness that we've often found lacking in Edward Curtis's pictures on this topic. In addition to the evocative subject matter of these pictures, there's a real physical pleasure to be had from the prints themselves—platinums and gum-bichromates that vary deliciously in texture and tone. Through July 14. (Museum of Modern Art.)

SHORT LIST—SALLY APFELBAUM, Lieberman & Saul, 55 Spring St., and Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (through May 23); BISON FRERES and RICHARD TEPE, Lowinsky, 575 Broadway (through May 30); ADAM FÜSS, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 13); ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through June 20); ZOE LEONARD, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through June 3); HELEN LEVITT, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45; through June 28); SALLY MANN, Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. (through June 27); CINDY SHERMAN, Horan, 35 E. 67th St. (open Mondays, through June 12); LORNA SIMPSON, Baer, 476 Broome St. (through June 20); SANDY SKOGLUND, Borden, 560 Broadway (through June 19); MIKE & DOUG STARN, Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through May 23).

MUSIC

JOSEF HOFMANN, the once celebrated and now nearly forgotten pianist, whose Chopin concerto performances were mentioned here last week, figures rather stunningly in the self-portrait in sound that the Chicago Symphony issued about a year ago, on twelve thoughtfully programmed compact disks. The set combines out-of-print commercial recordings by the orchestra with live-broadcast material that had never been published before, chosen by a large, informal committee assembled by Henry Fogel, the orchestra's executive director. The Chicago Symphony started making records in 1916 (the very first one, Mendelssohn's Wedding March, is included in the set); since then, every music director associated with the group and plenty of prominent guest conductors have been busy in the studios. Only those whose record collections are extremely well stocked will have all of the material reissued here—and even they will be fascinated by the never-issued live material. There is, for instance, a Stokowski-led Shostakovich Tenth Symphony from 1966—a work Stokowski never recorded commercially, though Shostakovich was one of his special affinities. But for us the most exciting entry is a truly princely rendition of Beethoven's last piano concerto, broadcast in 1940, with Hofmann and Hans Lange (then the orchestra's assistant conductor). Hofmann is at his most personal and commanding, and he approaches the piece from assumptions that are all the more engaging for being so unlike our own. (The set costs a hundred and seventy-five dollars—cheap at the price—plus five dollars for postage and handling, and can be obtained from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Fulfillment Center, 847 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60607.)

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

OPERA MANHATTAN—Presenting Poulenc's "Dialogues of the Carmelites," in English. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. May 22 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Presenting its final performances of Mozart's "The Magic Flute" (in English). (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. May 23 at 7:30 and May 24 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Final concerts of the season. Kurt Masur conducts Ravel's "La Valse" as well as several works spotlighting members of the orchestra: Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's Flute Concerto (with Jeanne Baxtresser), Jacques Hétu's Trumpet Concerto (with Philip Smith), Chabrier's "Larghetto" and Dukas's "Villanelle" (both featuring French hornist Philip Myers), and Haydn's Sinfonia Concertante in B-Flat Major (with violinist Charles Rex, oboist Joseph Robinson, bassoonist David Carroll, and cellist Alan Stepansky). (Avery Fisher Hall. May 19 at 7:30.). . . ¶ Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem," a passionate, pacifist outcry against bellicosity. Conducted by Kurt Masur (with assistance from Samuel Wong); with the New York Choral Artists, the American Boychoir, and soloists Yvonne Kenny (soprano), Jerry Hadley (tenor), and David Wilson-Johnson (bari-

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MUSIC–Cont'd

tone). (Avery Fisher Hall. May 21-23 at 8. . . . ¶ Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. May 25 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Greenwich Village Singers—Mark Mangini directs Bruckner's E-Minor Mass, in addition to shorter works by Brahms, Vaughan Williams, and others. (St. Joseph's Church, 371 Sixth Ave. May 20 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Sylvan Winds—The wind ensemble performs Mozart's Serenade in E-Flat Major (K. 375), an arrangement (for ten winds) of Mendelssohn's Octet, and a work by Scott Eyerly. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. May 21 at 8.)

New York Youth Symphony—Samuel Wong conducts Brahms' Symphony No. 2 and a new work by Michael Ruszczynski, and Anthony Aibel conducts Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 (featuring Jessica Guideri). (Carnegie Hall. May 24 at 3. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 581-5933.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts the American première of Vivaldi's "La Sena Festeggiante," a cantata written in homage to Louis XV, in which the River Seine (in the person of bass Ara Berberian) carries on a discourse with the Golden Age (sung by soprano Pamela Myers) and Virtue (mezzo-soprano Susan Shafer); with the Metropolitan Singers/The Greek Choral Society and narrator Lynn Redgrave. (Alice Tully Hall. May 27 at 8.)

New York Debut Orchestra—Roberto de Barros conducts a "Sinfonia Breve" by Bellini, orchestral arrangements of two of Brahms' piano intermezzos, a symphony by Boccherini, and Bach's Concerto for Violin and Oboe (featuring violinist Sergei de Carvalho and oboist Mischa Mamedov). (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 307-1990. May 27 at 8.)

RECITALS

Olivier Latry—The organist (who has served as one of the four titular organists of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris since 1985, when he was twenty-three years old) performs a Gallic program that includes works by Widor, Dupré, and Messiaen, in addition to improvisations on themes submitted by the audience. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. May 19 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 288-3588.)

Mordecai Shehori—The pianist performs four works by Liszt—the F-Sharp-Major Impromptu, "Au Bord d'une Source," "Canzone" (an elaborated transcription derived from Rossini's "Otello"), and "Funérailles"—as well as Beethoven's "Eroica Variations" (Op. 35) and Schubert's A-Major Sonata (D. 959). (Weill Recital Hall. May 19 at 8.)

Peter Schickele—Mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Hart, the Lark String Quartet, and other performers offer a selection of Mr. Schickele's compositions, including his "Mountain Music" and his String Quartet No. 2. (Bargemusic, Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 19 at 8. . . . ¶ Merkin Concert Hall. May 20 at 8.)

Valéry Bukrinski—The pianist performs works by Chopin, Albéniz, de Falla, and Liszt. (Spanish Institute, 684 Park Ave., at 68th St. 628-0420. May 20 at 6:30.)

Carolyn Sebron—Soprano, performing songs by Duparc, Debussy, de Falla, and others; with pianist Eliza Garth. (Weill Recital Hall. May 20 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Performing piano trios by Schubert (in E-Flat Major, D. 929), Debussy (in G Major, an early work from 1880), and Beethoven (the composer's own trio arrangement of his Second Symphony). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 21 at 7:30 and May 24 at 4.)

Veronica Tyler—Soprano, singing arias by Mozart, Verdi, Puccini, Menotti, and others—all performed in costume, and semi-staged. Pianist Margaret Singer assists. (Alice Tully Hall. May 23 at 8.)

Noel Lin—Pianist, performing Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata, Chopin's B-Minor Sonata, Poulenc's Eight Nocturnes, and Dutilleux's Chorale and Variations. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 23 at 9.)

VineyardMusicke—The period-instrument chamber group performs music from colonial Brazil, including works by José Maurício Nunes García and Haydn's pupil Sigismund Ritter von Neukomm. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. May 26 at 8.)

Lou Reed

JAZZ/POP/ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Lou Reed—Everything off-putting about this obdurate rocker—the flat, monaural voice, the mask-like terrapin scowl, the literary affectations and self-memorializing tendencies—falls away when he steps onstage and plugs in an electric guitar. Bruce Springsteen may be more user-friendly, and Neil Young may own the territory west of the Mississippi, but Lou Reed's loud works of art speak with the same extra-large authority, and burn with the same enduring dedication to authentic feeling and hard answers. His new greatest-hits boxed set, "Between Thought and Expression," is an utterly convincing document made up of equal parts of nastiness, tenderness, and sorrow, and it is astonishingly mature from start to finish. When he's playing those songs live, this man is the King of New York. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 26-27 at 8.)

Cher—It's hard to imagine that anyone goes to a Cher concert for the *music* (except for some of the silly, redolent oldies). America's bare-bottomed sweetheart represents a particularly accessible kind of celebrity: her gaudy vulgarity has a friendliness and nonchalance that removes the distance between the fabulous and the populace. What other star combines blunt humor, endearing self-doubt, and exhibitionism on a titanic scale? Michael Jackson and Madonna may give us the creeps or scare us, but Cher invites us in and dishes the dirt. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. May 27-31 at 8.)

Robert Fripp—With Trey Gunn on May 19, and with the California Guitar Trio on May 20. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Concerts at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Music of Madagascar—Rossy, Rakoto Frah, and Henry Kaiser. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. May 22 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

"The Art of the Spiritual"—Susheel Bibbs, Elvira Green, Kenn Hicks, Autris Paige, and the Boricua College Chorus, conducted by William Warfield. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 24 at 8.)

Count Basie Orchestra—Frank Foster conducting. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 25 at 7.)

Gary Moore & the Midnight Blues Band—With Albert Collins. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 27 at 7:30.)

Wynton Marsalis—Presenting the première of "In This House/On This Morning," a full-length composition. With Todd Williams, Wes Anderson, Wycliffe Gordon, Eric Reed, Reginald Veal, and Herlin Riley. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. May 27 at 9.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the California Angels, May 18-20 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Milwaukee Brewers, May 22 at 7:30, May 23-24 at 1:30, and May 25 at 1.

Mets—Vs. the Cincinnati Reds, May 25-27 at 7:40.

CHAMPIONSHIP—BASKETBALL

Knicks—If their impossible dream comes true and they prevail against the Bulls, the Knicks will face either the Cleveland Cavaliers or the Boston Celtics in the Eastern Conference finals.

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and the Knicks at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Bookish—The Small Press Center, at 20 W. 44th St., has on display an exhibition, called "Roots in Print," of books on such subjects as immigration and ethnicity. Titles include "New Italian Women," "Soviet Laughter, Soviet Tears," "My Folks Don't Want to Talk About Slavery," and "Home on the Hill: A Bombay Girlhood." Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6; through June 25.

Rose Week—At the New York Botanical Garden, a week-long tribute to roses (of the family Rosaceae), May 23-31. The main events are daily guided tours of the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden. For a complete schedule of rose-related events, call 220-8616.

Wooden Boats—Handmade kayaks, skiffs, canoes, and runabouts will be on view downtown at the South Street Seaport, May 23-25, from 10 to 5. Their builders will be on hand to answer questions about wave drag and beam-draft ratio. For more information, call 669-9424.

Spring Rite—The Lower East Side is rife with small, vest-pocket gardens and, on May 24, they will be the sites of much carousing, both primal and civilized. For example: at 1:30, there with be a garden party, at 9th St. and Avenue C. Attendees should wear hats and bring their best manners; at 4:30, on 4th St. between Avenues C and D, Linda Cassens will present a spring-inspired performance piece; at 5:30, on 3rd St. between Avenues C and D, people will be able to watch birds of paradise (made of silk, perched on poles) migrate and roost. For a complete schedule of events, call 431-0241.

Art Show—By now a Memorial Day tradition, the Greenwich Village Outdoor Art Show was started in 1931 by a group of wealthy New Yorkers who were concerned that the Depression would cause local artists to starve. This year, three hundred and fifty artists will be participating and all are eligible for prizes. May 23-25, from noon to sundown. Through May 31.

Readings—May 19 at 7: Juan Gelman reads from his own poetry, in Spanish, and Linda Gregg reads from her own poetry, in English. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. Admission by contribution.). . . ¶ May 19 at 8: Thulani Davis, John Henrik Clarke, and Ntozake Shange, in a tribute to Malcolm X. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. For information about tickets, call 875-4124.). . . ¶ May 19 at 8: Toni Morrison reads from her new novel. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.). . . ¶ May 27 at 7: Fran Lebowitz, John Giorno, and Deborah Eisenberg read from their own prose. (Pat Hearn Gallery, 39 Wooster St. Admission by contribution.)

Memoranda—*Memorial Day is celebrated on* May 25. Along with all the usual grilling, festivities include concerts and fireworks at the South Street Seaport. . . . ¶ An antique show, sponsored by Wendy, will be held at the 7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St., May 20, from 4 to 9, May 21-23, from noon to 9, and May 24, from noon to 6.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Edward II" (directed by Derek Jarman).
Theatre 2: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
Theatre 3: "The Waterdance" (Neal Jimenez and Michael Steinberg), with Eric Stoltz, Wesley Snipes, William Forsythe, Helen Hunt, and Elizabeth Peña.
Theatre 4: Through May 21: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury. From May 22: "Zentropa" (Lars Von Trier, in English and German), with Jean-Marc Barr, Barbara Sukowa, and Eddie Constantine.
Theatre 5: "Night on Earth" (†).
Theatre 6: "Proof" (Jocelyn Moorhouse).

LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
May 18: Theatre closed.
May 19-21: "Love on the Run" (1979, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud, Marie-France Pisier, and Claude Jade; and "The Woman Next Door" (1981, Truffaut; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant.
May 22-24: "The Last Metro" (1981, François Truffaut; in French), with Catherine Deneuve, Gérard Depardieu, and Jean Poiret; and "The Soft Skin" (1964, Truffaut; in French), with Jean Desailly, François Dorléac, and Nelly Benedetti.
May 25: Theatre closed.
From May 26: "Confidentially Yours" (1984, François Truffaut; in French), with Fanny Ardant and Jean-Louis Trintignant; and "The Man Who Loved Women" (1977, Truffaut; in French), with Charles Denner, Brigitte Fossey, Nelly Borgeaud, and Leslie Caron.

NEWMAN THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through May 19: Theatre closed.
From May 20: "The Enchantment" (Shunichi Nagasaki; in Japanese), with Masao Kusakari, Kumiko Akiyoshi, and Kiwako Harada.

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 3" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, and Joe Pesci.
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lethal Weapon 3."

LOEWS VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore.
Theatre 2: "K2" (†).
Theatre 3: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze, Pauline Collins, and Om Puri.
Theatre 4: "Year of the Comet" (Peter Yates), with Penelope Ann Miller, Tim Daly, and Louis Jourdan.
Theatre 5: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 6: "Deep Cover" (†).
Theatre 7: Through May 21: "Incident at Oglala" (Michael Apted), a documentary. From May 22: To be announced.

CINEMA VILLAGE 12TH STREET, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"The Good Woman of Bangkok" (Dennis O'Rourke).

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French), with Michel Bouquet.
Theatre 2: "Cabeza de Vaca" (Nicolas Echevarria; in Spanish).
Theatre 3: "Daughters of the Dust" (1991, Julie Dash).
Theatre 4: "The Favor, the Watch, and the Very Big Fish" (Ben Lewin), with Bob Hoskins, Jeff Goldblum, Natasha Richardson, and Michel Blanc.
Theatre 5: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre.
Theatre 7: Through May 21: "Othello" (1952, Orson Welles), with Welles. From May 22: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 23.

CINEMA VILLAGE 3RD AVENUE, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"The Fourth Animation Celebration: The Movie."

LOEWS 19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, and Joe Pesci.
Theatre 3: "White Sands" (†).
Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 5: "Lethal Weapon 3."
Theatre 6: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Playboys" (†).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through May 21: "Thunderheart" (†).
From May 22: "Alien³" (David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Beethoven" (†); and (evenings only) "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.
Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 21: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn. From May 22: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.
Theatre 4: "Hear My Song" (Peter Chelsom), with Ned Beatty, Adrian Dunbar, and Tara Fitzgerald.

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 3" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, and Joe Pesci.
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lethal Weapon 3."

At Angelika Film Center and Baronet, Eric Stoltz in "The Waterdance"

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through May 21: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).
From May 22: "Far and Away" (Ron Howard), with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Cutting Edge" (†).

SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through May 21: "Incident at Oglala" (Michael Apted), a documentary. From May 22: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through May 21: "Shadows and Fog" (Woody Allen). From May 22: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.

CROWN GOTHAM, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"My Cousin Vinny" (†).

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"A Midnight Clear" (†).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.
Theatre 2: "Deep Cover" (†).

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"White Men Can't Jump" (†).

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "The Waterdance" (Neal Jimenez and Michael Steinberg), with Eric Stoltz, Wesley Snipes, William Forsythe, Helen Hunt, and Elizabeth Peña,
Theatre 2: Through May 21: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore. From May 22: "Far and Away" (Ron Howard), with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Playboys" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish).

ART EAST CINEMA, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
"Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Beethoven" (†); and (evenings only) "Folks!" (Ted Kotcheff), with Tom Selleck, Don Ameche, and Anne Jackson.
Theatre 2: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 3: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 4: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze, Pauline Collins, and Om Puri.
Theatre 5: "Leaving Normal" (Edward Zwick), with Christine Lahti and Meg Tilly.
Theatre 6: Through May 21: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King). From May 22: "Alien³" (David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.

GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "White Sands" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Player" (†).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 3" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, and Joe Pesci.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3."

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"K2" (†).

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through May 21: "White Men Can't Jump" (†). From May 22: "Alien³" (David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.
Theatre 2: Through May 21: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King). From May 22: "Far and Away" (Ron Howard), with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

LOEWS ORPHEUM VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 3" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, and Joe Pesci.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3."
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 4: "Lethal Weapon 3."

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Theatre 5: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 6: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 7: (Matinées only) "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "A Midnight Clear" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 21: "Deep Cover" (†). From May 22: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Caroline Leaf: An Animated Life." From May 20: "Once Upon a Time in China" (directed by Tsui Hark; in Cantonese, with Chinese and English subtitles).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Titicut Follies" (1967, Fred Wiseman), a documentary made at the state prison for the criminally insane at Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

WAVERLY I AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 21: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn. From May 22: "Far and Away" (Ron Howard), with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 21: "White Men Can't Jump" (†). From May 22: "Alien³" (David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "A Midnight Clear" (†).
Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).
Theatre 3: "Who Shot Patakango?" (Robert Brooks).
Theatre 4: (Separate admissions) "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish); and "American Dream" (†).

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins.
Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 21: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King). From May 22: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.
Theatre 4: Through May 21: "Leaving Normal" (Edward Zwick), with Christine Lahti and Meg Tilly. From May 22: "Alien³" (David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.
Theatre 5: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 6: "Deep Cover" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 8: Through May 21: "The Player" (†). From May 22: "Far and Away" (Ron Howard), with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.
Theatre 9: "A Midnight Clear" (†).

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "K2" (†).
Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Beethoven" (†); and (evenings only) "Folks!" (Ted Kotcheff), with Tom Selleck, Don Ameche, and Anne Jackson.

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through May 21: "K2" (†).
From May 22: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film; and (evenings only) "The Cutting Edge" (†).
Theatre 3: "Beethoven" (†).
Theatre 4: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet).
Theatre 5: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 6: "The Babe" (Arthur Hiller), with John Goodman.

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through May 21: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze, Pauline Collins, and Om Puri.

William Wyler's 1939 film of Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights" (playing May 24, at Theatre 80 St. Marks) tugs the audience immediately into a romantic, haunted vision of the Yorkshire moors. Its melancholy pull isn't a matter of special effects; until the end, the ghosts remain offscreen. The picture's greatness arises from its aching beauty and the astounding piece of acting at its core: Laurence Olivier's performance as Heathcliff, the stableboy locked in destructive thrall with a country squire's daughter. Wyler ignites the thirty-two-year-old Olivier's gift for irony, his feral potency, and his unique dynamic sullenness. With a Ben Hecht–Charles MacArthur script that extracts the central relationship from Brontë's novel, the director and a crew of Hollywood's finest—cinematographer Gregg Toland, art director James Basevi, and editor Daniel Mandell—create a mood of thwarted yearning and sustain it for a hundred minutes.

Olivier overshadows Merle Oberon, who plays the capricious, moody Cathy; she lacks originality and spark. Still, moment by moment she displays enough conviction and sensitivity to make Wyler's stylized conceptions work. The closeups of Oberon's febrile eyes—when she dreams she's seeing Heathcliff and then realizes that she is *seeing him—bring the movie to fever pitch. Geraldine Fitzgerald is note-perfect as Isabella, Cathy's sister-in-law and Heathcliff's wife. And Alfred Newman never scored a movie with more suppleness and eloquence: his plaintive theme for Cathy whistles on the wind. The screenplay doesn't try to encompass Brontë's violent extremes. But Wyler and Olivier succeed in imbuing Brontë's blasphemy—Heathcliff's renunciation of any power that denies his love—with both a turbulent, demonic undertow and the ennobling feelings of heroic tragedy.*

From May 22: "Far and Away" (Ron Howard), with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

LOEWS FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre.

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"A Woman's Tale" (Paul Cox), with Sheila Florance.

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "The Favor, the Watch, and the Very Big Fish" (Ben Lewin), with Bob Hoskins, Jeff Goldblum, Natasha Richardson, and Michel Blanc.
Theatre 2: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury.

LOEWS FINE ARTS, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (†).

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, Rupert Graves, Giovanni Guidelli, Barbara Jefford, and Helen Mirren.

LOEWS COLUMBUS CIRCLE, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through May 21: "K2" (†).
From May 22: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.

62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Night on Earth" (†).

LINCOLN PLAZA 1, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).
Theatre 2: "Adam's Rib" (Viatcheslav Krishtofovitch; in Russian).
Theatre 3: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French).

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through May 21: "Leaving Normal" (Edward Zwick), with Christine Lahti and Meg Tilly.
From May 22: "Far and Away" (Ron Howard), with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "White Sands" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, and Joe Pesci.
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 4: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.
Theatre 5: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 6: "Lethal Weapon 3."

METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 21: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore. From May 22: "Alien³" (David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Beethoven" (†); and (evenings only) "Deep Cover" (†).
Theatre 2: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through May 21: "My Cousin Vinny" (†). From May 22: "Alien³" (directed by David Fincher), with Sigourney Weaver.
Theatre 2: Through May 21: "White Sands" (†). From May 22: "Alien³."
Theatre 3: Through May 21: "Deep Cover" (†). From May 22: "Alien³."
Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 5: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 6: "Lethal Weapon 3" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson, Danny Glover, and Joe Pesci.
Theatre 7: "Lethal Weapon 3."

EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Heavy Metal."

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (Penelope Spheeris), with Mike Myers and Dana Carvey.
Theatre 3: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins.

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris), with Brian Krause, Mädchen Amick, and Alice Krige.

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King).
Theatre 2: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.

REVIVAL HOUSES

LE CINEMATOGRAPHE, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)
Through May 21: "Shoot for the Contents" (directed by Trinh T. Minh-ha) and "Johanna d'Arc of Mongolia" (Ulrike Ottinger).
From May 22: To be announced.

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through May 19: "Raspad" (Mikhail Belikov; in Russian).
May 20-21: "Top Hat" (1935, Mark Sandrich), with Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire; and "Footlight Parade" (1933, Lloyd Bacon), with James Cagney, Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, and Joan Blondell.
May 22-23: "Dial M for Murder" (1954, Alfred Hitchcock), with Ray Milland, Grace Kelly, Robert Cummings, Anthony Dawson, and John Williams; and "House of Wax" (1953, André de Toth), with Phyllis Kirk, Vincent Price, Frank Lovejoy, and Carolyn Jones.
May 24-26: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins; and "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" (1989, Terry Gilliam), with John Neville.

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From May 27: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick), with Sue Lyon, James Mason, Peter Sellers, and Shelley Winters.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

May 18: "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp" (1926, Harry Edwards; silent), with Harry Langdon; and a program of short films Capra made at the Mack Sennett studios.

May 19-20: "Ladies of Leisure" (1930, Frank Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Ralph Graves, Marie Prevost, and Lowell Sherman; and "Forbidden" (1932, Capra), with Stanwyck, Adolphe Menjou, and Ralph Bellamy.

May 21: "The Power of the Press" (1928, Frank Capra), with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Jobyna Ralston, and Mildred Harris; and "Flight" (1929, Capra), with Jack Holt, Ralph Graves, Lila Lee, and Alan Roscoe.

May 22-24: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Frank Capra), with Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable; and "Platinum Blonde" (†).

May 25-26: "Long Pants" (†); and another programs of short films Frank Capra made at the Mack Sennet studios. (May 25 at 7 and 9:20, "The Donovan Affair" (1929, Capra), with Jack Holt, Dorothy Revier, William Collier, Jr., and Agnes Ayres.)

From May 27: "The Younger Generation" (1929, Frank Capra), with Lina Basquette and Ricardo Cortez; and "The Way of the Strong" (1928, Capra), with Mitchell Lewis, Alice Day, and Margaret Livingston.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

May 18: "The 47 Ronin" (1942, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese).

May 19: "Tight Little Island" ("Whisky Galore!"; 1949, Alexander Mackendrick), with Basil Radford and Joan Greenwood; and "Passport to Pimlico" (1949, Henry Cornelius), with Stanley Holloway and Margaret Rutherford.

May 20: "Mean Streets" (1973, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, and Amy Robinson; and "The King of Comedy" (1983, Scorsese), with De Niro and Jerry Lewis.

May 21: "Lola" (1982, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German); and "Veronika Voss" (1982, Fassbinder; in German), with Rosel Zech.

May 22-23: "The Trial" (1962, Orson Welles), with Anthony Perkins, Jeanne Moreau, Suzanne Flon, Elsa Martinelli, and Romy Schneider; and "The Third Man" (1950, Carol Reed), with Welles, Joseph Cotten, Alida Valli, and Trevor Howard.

May 24: "Wuthering Heights" (see page 22); and "Jane Eyre" (1944, Robert Stevenson), with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles.

May 25: "Hour of the Wolf" (1968, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann; and "The Passion of Anna" (1970, Bergman; in Swedish), with Ullmann, Bibi Andersson, Sydow, and Erland Josephson.

May 26: "The Big House" (1930, George Hill), with Wallace Beery, Chester Morris, and Robert Montgomery; and "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang" (1932, Mervyn LeRoy), with Paul Muni, Glenda Farrell, Edward Ellis, and Helen Vinson.

May 27: "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), with Audrey Hepburn, Fred Astaire, Kay Thompson, and Michel Auclair; and "Sabrina"(1954, Billy Wilder), with Humphrey Bogart, Hepburn, William Holden, and John Williams.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—May 19 at 2:30 and May 25 at 5: "Death Ray" (1925, directed by Lev Kuleshov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 19 at 3 and 6: "French Connections" (1988, Josephine Hayes Dean) and "Dear Lisa: A Letter to My Sister" (1990, J. Clements), both documentaries. . . . ¶ May 19 at 6: "Parisian Cobbler" (1927, Friedrich Ermler; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 21 at 2:30: "Mother" (1926, V. I. Pudovkin; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 21 at 3 and 6: "Inside Life Outside" (1988, Sachiko Amanda and Scott Sinkler), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 21 at 6 and May 24 at 5: "October" (1927, Sergei Eisenstein; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 22 at 2:30 and May 26 at 6: "Mechanics of the Brain" (1925, Pudovkin; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 22 at 3: "The Cats" (1964, Henning Carlsen; in Swedish), with Eva Dahlbeck; and "Family Portraits" (1964, Carlsen; in Danish). . . . ¶ May 22 at 6: "Dilemma" (1964, Carlsen); and "Old People" (1961, Carlsen; in Danish), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 23 at 2: "Wings of a Serf" (1926, Yuri Tarich; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 23 at 2:30: "Hunger" (†). . . . ¶ May 23 at 5 and May 26 at 2:30: "Benya Kirk" (1926, Vladimir Vilner). . . . ¶ May 23 at 5 and May 26 at 3: "Oh, To Be on the Bandwagon" (1972, Carlsen; in Danish). . . . ¶ May 24 at 2: "By the Law" (1926, Kuleshov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 24 at 2:30: "A Happy Divorce" (1975, Carlsen; in French), with Jean Rochefort, Bulle Ogier, and André Dussollier. . . . ¶ May 24 at 5: "Did Somebody Laugh?" (1978, Carlsen; in Danish). . . . ¶ May 25 at 2: "Arsenal" (1929, Alexander Dovzhenko; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 25 at 3 and May 26 at 6: "Your Money or Your Life" (1982, Carlsen; in Danish). . . . ¶ May 25 at 6: "The Wolf at the Door" (1986, Carlsen; in English, with Italian subtitles), with Donald Sutherland and Max von Sydow.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—May 18 at 2 and 9: "Lung Ta: The Forgotten Tibet" (1991, Marie Jaoul de Poncheville and Franz-Christoph Giercke). . . . ¶ May 18 at 4 and 6:30, May 19 at 2 and 8:45, May 20 at 3:45, and May 21 at 8: "The Reincarnation of Khensur Rinpoche" (1991, Tenzing Sonam and Ritu Sarin); and "A Song for Tibet" (1991, Anne Henderson). . . . ¶ May 19 at 4:30 and 6:45 and May 20 at 2 and 8:15: "Menri Monastery" (1991, Duncan Burns and Roslyn Dauber) and "A Tibetan New Year" (1987, Jon Jerstad). . . . ¶ May 20 at 6:15 and 10 and May 21 at 2, 4, and 6: "The Horse Thief" (1986, Tian Zhuangzhuang). . . . ¶ May 22 at 2 and 8:30, May 24 at 4 and 7:30, May 25 at 8, and May 26 at 2: "Don Giovanni" (1979, Joseph Losey; in Italian), with Ruggero Raimondi. . . . ¶ May 23-24 at 2: "The Nutcracker Prince" (1990, Paul Schibli). . . . ¶ May 22 at 6, May 23 at 4, 6:15, and 8:30, May 25 at 2, 4, and 6, and May 26 at 6, 8, and 10: "The Stranger" (†). . . . ¶ May 27 at 2 and 6:30 and May 28 at 4:15 and 8:45: "They Call Us Misfits" (1968, Stefan Jarl) and "Memento Mori" (1991, Jarl). . . . ¶ May 27 at 4:15 and 8:45 and May 28 at 2 and 6:30: "The Respectable Life" (1979, Jarl).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Silent Witness: Russian Cinema Before the Revolution." May 23 at 2: "Leon Drey" (1915, Evgenii Bauer). . . . ¶ May 23 at 4: "A Life for a Life" (1916, Bauer). . . . ¶ May 24 at 2: "Little Ellie" (1918, Yakov Protozanov). . . . ¶ May 24 at 4: "Christmas Eve" (1913, Wladyslaw Starewicz).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 27 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Le Pullover Rouge" (1979, Michel Drach; in French), with Serge Avedikian, Michelle Marquais, Roland Bertin, and Roland Blanche.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—May 19 at noon: "Sherman's March" (1986, Ross McElwee). . . . ¶ May 26 at noon: "The Thin Blue Line" (†).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A Dennis Potter retrospective. May 21 at 5:30 and May 22 at 6: "A Tragedy of Two Ambitions" (1973, BBC), with John Hurt, Paul Rogers, and David Troughton; and "Where Adam Stood" (1976, BBC), with Alan Badel and Max Harris. . . . ¶ May 23 at noon: "The Mayor of Casterbridge" (1978, BBC), with Alan Bates, Anne Stallybrass, Janet Maw, and Anna Massey.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—May 19 at 6:30: "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cook; and "Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary" (1990). . . . ¶ May 20 at 6: "They Came Before Columbus" (1989, Clemson Brown) and "Quilombo" (1984, Carlos Diegues). . . . ¶ May 21 at 1, 4:10, and 7:30: "Livin' Large" (1991); and "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (1991, Joseph B. Vasquez). . . . ¶ May 22 at 1 and 3:55: "Hangin' with the Homeboys"; and "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (1991, Matty Rich). . . . ¶ May 22 at 6:30: "Redd Foxx: Blacks in Blue Comedy."

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—May 21-22 at 6, 8:15, and 10:30, May 23 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, and 7:45, and May 24 at noon, 2:15, 4:30, and 7: "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1991, Kurt Baker). . . . ¶ May 22 at 6:30: "Film Portrait" (1971, Jerome Hill). . . . ¶ May 22-23 at 8: A program of short films. . . . ¶ May 23 at 4: "Alexander Nevsky" (1938, Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian), with Nikolai Cherkassov. . . . ¶ May 23 at 6: "Program II: Rolls: 1971" (1972, Robert Huot). . . . ¶ May 24 at 2 and 8: A program of seven short films on the subject of palindromes. . . . ¶ May 24 at 4: "Listen to Britain" (1941, Humphrey Jennings), "Menilmontant" (1925, Dimitri Kirsanoff), "Ballet Mécanique" (1924, Fernand Leger and Dudley Murphy), and "Entr'Acte" (1924, René Clair and Francis Picabia). . . . ¶ May 24 at 6: "Program III: Third One-Year Movie—1972" (1973, Huot).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

erican Dream—Barbara Kopple's documentary, about a strike in a Minnesota meatpacking plant, is a lucid and unfussy piece of movie journalism which manages to be as complexly affecting as a great novel. The story that she tells here is a terrifying one. The workers at the Austin, Minnesota, plant of Geo. A. Hormel & Company decide to go on strike on August 17, 1985, rather than accept a rollback of their wages and benefits. The union, Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, is led by a militant president, Jim Guyette, and a fiery free-lance consultant, Ray Rogers. Together, Guyette and Rogers create a terrific spirit of energy and resolve in the rank and file. But Lewie Anderson, a veteran negotiator for the international union, thinks that their strategy is "doomed." As the strike wears on, our reactions to what we're seeing become more volatile. Our hearts are with the pumped-up rank and file of P-9, but our heads, increasingly (and surprisingly), are with the pragmatic Anderson: his analysis of the local's chances against the company proves accurate in virtually every particular. The movie embodies a kind of tragic understanding of American life—tragic in the original and the fullest sense, in which the spectacle of unspeakable calamity produces pity and terror and then an unforeseeable and penetrating clarity. This is a masterpiece of social art. Academy Award for best documentary in 1991.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/92.) (Quad Cinema.)

Basic Instinct—A vicious, grindingly manipulative urban mystery that uses a thick atmosphere of S & M kinkiness to distract the audience from the story's thinness and inanity. Michael Douglas plays a cop with a "dark side." Sharon Stone plays a rich, beautiful bisexual novelist who is the prime suspect in a murder case. He falls in love with her, and the two of them breathe heavily through the rest of the picture. Stone has a few bright moments early on. But our basic instinct as we watch Douglas's strenuous grimaces of sexual transport is to flee the theatre. And the mystery is so ineptly constructed that it's not much fun trying to work out the solution. We sense that the screenwriter, Joe Eszterhas, and the director, Paul Verhoeven, don't have any respect for the genre—that they're too jaded to care about anything but giving us enough voyeuristic jolts to keep us awake. When the picture is over, we realize that the only suspense that it has produced effectively is a weird kind of ideological suspense. Will the movie take its smarmy misogyny all the way, or will it pull back in the end? It goes all the

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

way.—T.R. (4/6/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Beauty and the Beast—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi," from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantel clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Cinema I, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas. Matinées only.)

Beethoven—The director, Brian Levant, mixes a grand canine cast with drab dramatis personae, including a cruel, avaricious vet (Dean Jones) who specializes in dognapping, and an uptight suburban daddy (Charles Grodin) who manufactures air freshener. The eponymous hero is a St. Bernard pup who grows into a hundred-and-eighty-five-pound behemoth, wreaks havoc on Grodin's home, eats everything in sight, and does good by his adopted family. This is a family affair with a vengeance: anyone outside the nuclear core is not to be trusted. But the only persuasive bonding occurs between Beethoven and an unidentified terrier, who are together for just a few minutes. The screenplay is credited to Edmond Dantes—the Count of Monte Cristo—and Amy Holden Jones.—M.S. (5/4/92) (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia. Matinées only.)

The Cutting Edge—Featuring D. B. Sweeney as an eye-damaged, working-class ex-hockey player who partners snooty figure skater Moira Kelly, this Olympic fantasy and love story has turned into a word-of-mouth must-see for high-school girls. They attend in swarms to ogle Sweeney's uncomplicated hunkiness, to identify with poor little rich Kelly's need for passionate love, to laugh at the most basic sexual references and rank-outs, and to cheer at gold-medal time. The hot-and-cold aura of romance on ice inures rapt female teenyboppers to the trumpery of the skating scenes, which are done in the belief-defying manner of "Flashdance." After the stunt skaters perform their risky business, the filmmakers cut to the gliding stars' glistening faces. This is the kind of odd-couple courtship in which Sweeney gives Kelly a genuine Bobby Hull game shirt and she gives him a copy of "Great Expectations." With Roy Dotrice and Terry O'Quinn; Paul M. Glaser directed Tony Gilroy's script.—M.S. (Eastside Cinema. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas. Evenings only.)

Deep Cover—Hip novelist-screenwriters Michael Tolkin and Henry Bean must not have watched enough TV in the eighties to realize that the premise of their script—an undercover cop gets sucked into big-time drug life—has been done to death. The director, Bill Duke, a veteran of shows like "Hill Street Blues" and "Miami Vice," should have fessed up. Larry Fishburne plays the righteous policeman who goes to work for the D.E.A. and discovers that he loves being a narcotics baron. Jeff Goldblum is the drug-dealing Jewish lawyer who becomes his partner in crime. Goldblum gets most of the good lines and a fair share of the awful ones. He knows what to do with them, but his character is self-loathing and loathsome—the White Negro in a slick post-yuppie edition. The visuals are as gaudy as the language (Bojan Bazelli did the look-at-me cinematography), and the plot is jolt-happy. If there's such a thing as dull flash, "Deep Cover" defines it.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Manhattan Twin, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Olympia. Evenings only. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin, and Criterion Center; through May 21.)

Howards End—James Ivory's movie version of the 1910 E. M. Forster novel is a handsome

At 8th Street Playhouse, Phyllis Kirk in "House of Wax"

and intelligent piece of work: a faithful, well-paced, and carefully crafted dramatization of a very good story. The heroine, Margaret Schlegel (Emma Thompson), is a thirtyish Englishwoman of German ancestry who lives with her sister and her brother in a London town house. The plot brings the cultured and rather high-minded Schlegels in contact with a very different sort of family, the Wilcoxes, who appear to represent English values at their most infuriatingly solid and complacent. The emotional core of the movie is the brief, unlikely friendship that develops between Margaret and conservative Ruth Wilcox (Vanessa Redgrave), a woman who inhabits a narrow world so profoundly, and with such enormous feeling, that she transforms it. Redgrave is at her most radiant in this role. And Thompson, whose character is meant to be seen as the heir to Mrs. Wilcox's thoroughly English kind of spirituality, comes through with a thrilling, original performance; she carries the movie. These luminous performances go a long way toward putting Forster's ambitious ideas across on the screen. (Anthony Hopkins, as the no-nonsense businessman Henry Wilcox, is awfully good, too.) The story holds us for the full two hours and twenty minutes that the movie takes to tell it; Ivory and his screenwriter, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, have done a skillful and sensitive job of adaptation. All that's missing, really, is the elusive quality that makes Forster such a brave, moving writer: his constant striving to see beyond the story, to see through it, to transcend it. Also with Helena Bonham Carter, Samuel West, James Wilby, Nicola Duffett, Prunella Scales, and Adrian Ross Magenty.—T.R. (5/4/92) (Loews Fine Arts.)

Hunger (1966)—Per Oscarsson plays a starving young writer—a performance with brilliant, glinting variations on self-mockery and paranoia. Henning Carlsen has transcribed the Knut Hamsun novel to the screen with amazing fidelity. It's an intense and remarkable movie—a classic of the starving-young-artist genre. With Gunnel Lindblom. In Swedish.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; May 23.)

K2—No, it's not about a spot remover or a lubricant but about the second-highest peak in the world and a pair of climbers (Michael Biehn and Matt Craven) who conquer it. The mountaineering footage is so spectacular and the melodrama that goes with it so flat that you wish the filmmakers had mounted an actual expedition and made a documentary. Patrick Meyers and Scott Roberts expanded and revised Meyers' gasbag play, boosting it from the unbearable to the merely hackneyed; Franc Roddam directed, and Gabriel Beristain did the panoramic cinematography. The cast includes Patricia Charbonneau, Julia Nickson-Soul, and Raymond J. Barry, but the real stars are the Canadian and Pakistani locations.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews Tower East, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ Guild, and Loews Columbus Circle; through May 21.)

Long Pants (1927)—This Harry Langdon comedy, directed by Frank Capra, wasn't up to "The Strong Man" of the year before; it has its dull side, but it has some inventive moments. Langdon, with his ineffectual, fluttering gestures, is a creepy mixture of the infantile and the effete. He isn't funny, exactly—he's fixating. Here, he plays a meek small-town adolescent who yearns for romance and finds it with his first pair of long pants. When he sees the scheming dame he falls for, she's sitting in an open car, and he circles around her on his bicycle, helplessly infatuated and trying to impress her by trick riding. He leaves his family and the girl next door and follows this vamp (Alma Bennett) to the city. (She turns out to be nothing less than a murderer.) Frankie Darro plays Harry as a small boy. Written by Arthur Ripley. Silent. Black-and-white, with (originally) a dream sequence in color—P.K. (Film Forum 2; May 25-26.)

A Midnight Clear—Everything about this anti-war film is geared for poignancy, from the snow-swept settings (the area around Park City, Utah, stands in for Europe) to the Christian symbolism. But what keeps viewers watching this tale of six young G.I.s on the German-French border in the winter of 1944 is the tense jeopardy of military service. The heroes belong to a genius-I.Q. intelligence-and-reconnaissance unit; the action hinges on their vain attempt to complete a rapprochement with a handful of weary Germans. The movie is high-strung yet shock-proofed. A voice-over narration sets a tone of boyish contemplation and signals that there'll be spiritual solace even if the worst happens. The writer-director, Keith Gordon, has reverently adapted William Wharton's 1982 novel. His movie has no traction, only a holy, sepulchral glow. It's so determined to be haunting that it gives up the ghost. Ethan Hawke, Gary Sinise, Frank Whaley, Kevin Dillon, Peter Berg, and Arye Gross play the soldiers; Mark Isham did the rustling mood music, and Tom Richmond the blue-white cinematography.—M.S. (5/18/92) (Plaza, 86th Street East Twin, Quad Cinema, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

My Cousin Vinny—The recipe behind this Dixie-based comedy hit is simple. The Southern characters consider themselves the salt of the earth; the Northern ones are proud to be the pepper. Joe Pesci plays Vinny Gambini, a neophyte Brooklyn lawyer who hightails it down to Wahzoo City, Alabama, to help his college-boy cousin (Ralph Macchio) and a friend (Mitchell Whitfield) beat a bum murder rap. Vinny's quest takes at least thirty minutes too long. The producer-screenwriter, Dale Launer, bides his time, scattering hoary gags while planting details that eventually pay off. Luckily, the director, Jonathan Lynn, keeps the cork on Pesci, releasing his energy only in the trial sequences, and doesn't rely on him to carry the movie. Marisa Tomei, as Vinny's fiancée, imbues the most obligatory reactions with either a startling ferocity or a farcical ambiguity worthy of her character's name: Mona Lisa Vito. Fred Gwynne brings a wise, weighty charm to the role of a Yale-educated judge; in a cartoon, he'd be a basset hound called Beauregard. When Pesci sags, Tomei, Gwynne, and others (especially Austin Pendleton) perk things up. At best, it's a genial variety show that could use more variety.—M.S. (4/20/92) (Crown Gotham, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ 34th St. East, and Criterion Center; through May 21.)

Night on Earth—This anthology film, written and directed by Jim Jarmusch ("Stranger Than Paradise"), has a gimmicky premise. Each of its five stories takes place in a different city, and each is about a taxicab ride. All the trips are going on at the same time, but in different time zones, so there's

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an illusion of temporal progress: the picture begins at sunset in Los Angeles and ends at dawn in Helsinki. (The intervening episodes take place in New York, Paris, and Rome.) It's a feeble but serviceable conceit; if the sketches were funny, we'd barely notice the preciousness of the structure. Unfortunately, the material is very thin, and the movie doesn't vary its style from sketch to sketch: Jarmusch sticks doggedly to his trademark deadpan manner. The comedian Roberto Benigni, playing a motor-mouth cabbie in the Italian episode, briefly enlivens the picture with a riotous erotic monologue. But, for the most part, the movie induces in the viewer an eerie, suspended feeling that mimics the time-stands-still monotony of a long airplane journey. It tries for a chipper, lighthearted tone, but it gives the audience a gruelling flight—a red-eye to nowhere. Also with Winona Ryder, Gena Rowlands, Giancarlo Esposito, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Rosie Perez, Isaach de Bankolé, Béatrice Dalle, and Matti Pellonpää. In English, French, Italian, and Finnish.—T.R. (5/18/92) (Angelika Film Center, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Platinum Blonde (1931)—Frank Capra's early talkie about a glib newspaper reporter (Robert Williams) who marries an aristocratic heiress (Jean Harlow, ludicrously miscast but fun to watch anyway). Almost a catalogue of the movie conventions of the period, complete to an effete valet (Claude Allister) and a comic butler (Halliwell Hobbes). The film's considerable attractions include Robert Riskin's uninhibited dialogue and ravishing Loretta Young, who, as a tough-minded girl reporter (prototype of the later Jean Arthur roles), is a natural aristocrat. With Louise Closser Hale, Reginald Owen, and Walter Catlett. From a story by Harry E. Chandlee and Douglas W. Churchill, which had been adapted by Jo Swerling, with continuity by Dorothy Howell; Riskin, a former playwright, livened it all up, and went on to do a series of hits with Capra. (The central performer, Robert Williams, whose style suggests that of Lee Tracy, was on the verge of stardom, but this was his last film; he died of a ruptured appendix.)—P.K. (Film Forum; May 22-24.)

The Playboys—This absorbing, uneven romantic comedy-drama, set in a small Irish town in 1957, takes its name from a travelling troupe. The heroine is an unwed mother named Tara (Robin Wright). She challenges every male authority figure in town and drives all the men wild—especially the violent, alcoholic constable, Sergeant Hegarty (Albert Finney), who seethes when he sees her with her actor lover Tom (Aidan Quinn). The screenwriters, Shane Connaughton (who co-wrote "My Left Foot") and Kerry Crabbe, are full of ideas and observations about orthodox religion, claustrophobic village mores, the craziness of life in a divided country, and the last gasp of strolling players before TV's ascendancy. Wright and Quinn are well matched, and the director, Gillies MacKinnon, and his cinematographer, Jack Conroy, provide images that sparkle with amorous possibilities. But the filmmakers don't funnel their panoply of themes gracefully into Tara's story. Her affair with Tom comes off as a foil to Finney's passionate portrait of stewed wrath and despair. He endows a clenched, masochistic character with such scale and force that he takes over the movie.—M.S. (5/18/92) (Gramercy, and Cinema II.)

The Player—The title character of Robert Altman's new movie is a young Hollywood studio executive named Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), who, for no very good reason, murders an aspiring screenwriter. The picture is a brilliant dark comedy about the death of American filmmaking. It's like a documentary about a mirage: the world it shows us is sunlit and shimmering, and the people have the thin presence of holograms. Altman is doing one of his specialties here—exploring an odd American subculture—and when his idiosyncratic realism is applied to the insular, constantly self-regarding community of Hollywood "players" it has an almost hallucinatory effect. The movie has the exhilarating nonchalance of the director's seventies classics, and its tone is volatile, elusive: with breathtaking assurance, it veers from psychological-thriller suspense to goofball comedy to icy satire. Altman turns the self-reflective world of Hollywood into a fun house in which every grotesque distortion somehow appears to us as a newly discovered, paradoxical truth. Robbins gives a layered, richly suggestive performance—the sort of performance that Altman's style, at its best, produces without obvious effort. At sixty-seven, Altman still seems like the youngest filmmaker in America.—T.R. (4/20/92) (Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

The Stranger ("Agantuk")—The last movie by the Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray is a modest picture, a graceful domestic comedy made in a serene, leisurely classical style. A middle-class Calcutta couple, Anila and Sudhindra Bose (played by Mamata Shankar and Deepankar De), receive an unexpected visit from a man claiming to be Anila's long-lost uncle Manmohan Mitra, who left India for Europe in 1955 and has never returned. Mitra (Utpal Dutt) is a charming, erudite, and not particularly threatening middle-aged man, but the Boses can't resolve their doubts about his identity. This movie, like each of Ray's twenty-seven previous features, doesn't announce itself immediately: both its style and its story are based on the principle that knowledge of people can be acquired only gradually and tentatively, by means of a patient accumulation of intimate experiences. His films require us to live with his characters for a while before we decide who they really are. Ray's manner here is unusually direct and plainspoken: there are a handful of awkward moments in which he seems to be lecturing the audience on the shallowness of contemporary society. This is a lovely, flawed movie rather than a great one, but if we listen closely and wait until the end before making up our minds about it we can still hear in it the voice of a great artist. In Bengali.—T.R. (5/18/92) (Walter Reade Theatre; May 22-23 and 25-26.)

At Theatre 80 St. Marks, Chester Morris and Robert Montgomery in "The Big House"

The Thin Blue Line (1988)—Errol Morris's trance-like, almost lyrical documentary tells the story of a 1976 cop-killing in Dallas and examines the process by which a man who is almost certainly innocent was convicted and sentenced to death for the crime. The movie doesn't have the structure either of "60 Minutes"-style investigative journalism or of detective fiction, though it borrows elements from both; its form is circular, spiralling, its obsessive, repetitive visual motifs echoed in Philip Glass's hauntingly monotonous score. There are interviews with the principals, closeups of key words and paragraphs from newspaper accounts, courtroom sketches, maps, family-album snapshots, diagrams, and a series of eerie reënactments of witnesses' different versions of the murder and the events that led up to it. This is documentary as epistemological thriller: Morris wants to bring us to the point at which our apprehension of the real world reaches the pitch of paranoia. In showing us the lies, the fears, the social pressures, the ulterior motives, the stubbornness, and the plain confusion that combined to produce the case against the unfortunate Randall Adams—whose fate is worthy of a Borges hero—Morris seems to be investigating not just this squalid murder but the very nature of untruth. His style is occasionally too fancy and elliptical for absolute clarity, but this is a powerful and thrillingly strange movie. Morris—who actually uncovered new evidence in the course of making the film—has turned Randall Adams' case into a kind of tabloid poetry, a meditation on uncertainty and the fascination of violence. (On March 1, 1989, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals overturned the conviction of Randall Adams; he was released from prison shortly thereafter, and the Dallas District Attorney's office announced that it didn't intend to try the case again.)—T.R. (Donnell Library Center; May 26.)

Thunderheart—This murder mystery, set on a Sioux reservation, teams Sam Shepard, as an F.B.I. agent who speaks with forked tongue, and Val Kilmer, as an agent who thinks with forked mind. Kilmer's character is one-quarter Sioux, which apparently affects the right side of his brain—he gets mystical flashes and visions. When he hangs out with Indian traditionalists like the tribal cop played drolly by Graham Greene, his ancestral instincts emerge, leading him to truth, justice, and the Native American way. John Fusco's messagey script satirizes the stereotype of the all-knowing authentic Indian, then buys into it. The director, Michael Apted, elicits credible performances from Shepard and (in a tiny part) Fred Ward, and blends them confidently with the non-professionals in the supporting cast. But Kilmer is more callow than necessary. His lack of authority makes the raising of his consciousness seem more like a coming of age.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Loews Orpheum VII, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema; through May 21.)

White Men Can't Jump—A resourceful, sneaky-fast comedy about playground basketball. Ron Shelton, the writer and director, focusses on grown men trying to make a living at a boy's game, and he does full justice to the sweet absurdity of that enterprise. He keeps his eye on the fine points of playground culture and lets the story's meaning—and its humor—emerge from the details. The heroes, Sidney (Wesley Snipes) and Billy (Woody Harrelson), are addicted to the game. As a two-man team, they venture into the tough, hostile inner-city neighborhoods of Los Angeles and try to hustle the kings of the local courts. It's a great con: everyone assumes that Billy can't play the speedy, shake-and-bake style of black playground ball. Shelton and his crew (which includes the cinematographer Russell Boyd and the editor Paul Seydor) have put together basketball sequences that capture the free-flowing rhythms of the game. The two-on-two contests here give us the delicious feeling a player gets when he's *almost* out of control: flying but lucid. Harrelson's performance is rich, subtle, and delicately funny. And Snipes is just amazing: everything he does seems to leap off the screen. Shelton orchestrates the narrative like a veteran point guard: he's a wily pro with a streak of playground showmanship, and that's an ideal style for movies as well as for basketball.—T.R. (4/6/92) (Murray Hill Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Art Greenwich Twin; through May 21.)

White Sands—The kind of thriller that has a road atlas where the script should be. The director, Roger Donaldson, and the screenwriter, Daniel Pyne, send a small-town sheriff hurtling all over New Mexico to solve the mystery of a corpse found with half a million dollars. Willem Dafoe is completely out of his element as the Coop-like lawman; you can't be certain what his forced grin signifies, but it's sure not rural rectitude. Mickey Rourke plays an arms dealer and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is a liberal socialite who sometimes acts as Rourke's go-between. Apart from M. Emmet Walsh's amusingly crusty turn as a cynical coroner, the one thing in the movie that has any unruly life is Rourke's wild head of hair.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through May 21.)

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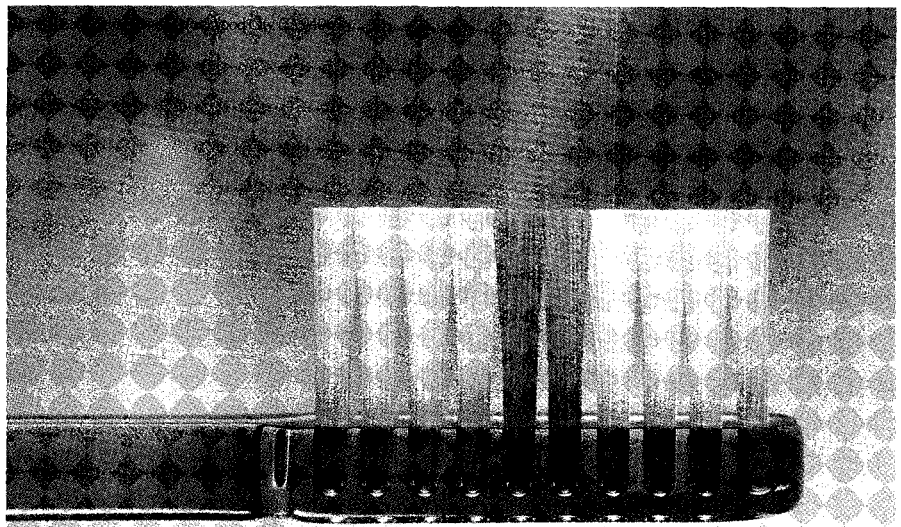
Your dentist can't remind you when to replace your toothbrush. That's our job.



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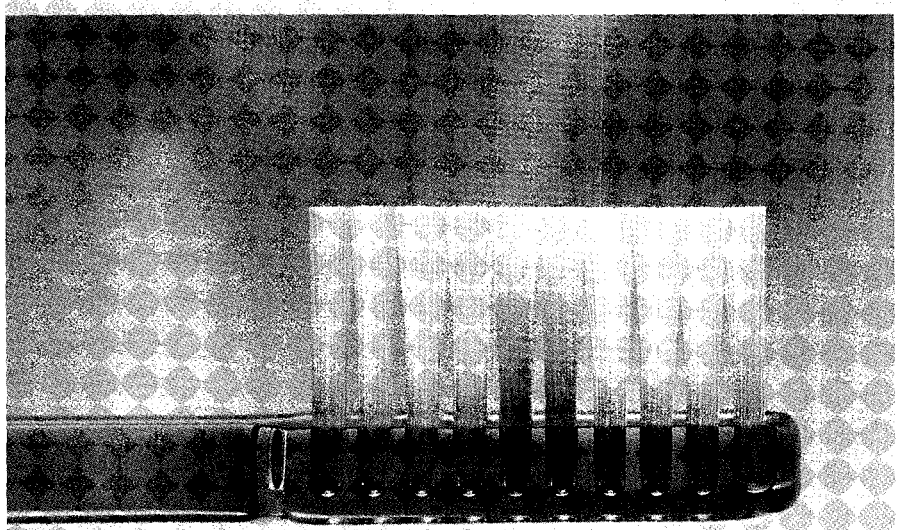

About 3 months later
(when dentists recommend replacing your toothbrush)

Although dentists advise you to replace your brush, they really can't be there to tell you when. But the Oral-B Indicator can.

You see, the American Dental Association recommends you replace your toothbrush every three months. They believe strongly that a worn toothbrush is less effective at removing plaque. That's why most dentists tell you to change your toothbrush. And the very reason Oral-B developed the INDICATOR® Toothbrush. The blue band fades with brushing, so you can see when it's time for a new Indicator. It's that simple.

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All in all, the Indicator is another fine example of Oral-B's ongoing commitment to serious dental care.

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

LESS than a year after Americans paraded in the streets to celebrate victory in the Gulf War, the entire conflict, which appeared so cataclysmic at the time, is rapidly receding from view. The troops have long since come home. Kuwait has become once again an obscure and wealthy desert land ruled by a medieval autocrat. And Saddam Hussein has been reduced to the stature of a nasty Third World dictator—more menacing than, say, Colonel Qaddafi but hardly "Hitler revisited."

One might have expected that in the months following the war our government would undertake to explain how Saddam came to be in a position to threaten "our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom," as President Bush claimed shortly after Iraqi troops occupied Kuwait—to explain, that is, how United States policy toward Iraq ended in bloodshed. Administration officials, however, have proved more eager to talk about the war itself than about the decisions that gave rise to it, while leaders in Congress, sensing themselves politically vulnerable because of their early skepticism about Desert Storm, have been loath to seem to "second-guess" the Administration. The entire matter would probably have been dropped were it not for a handful of journalists and one maverick congressman, Henry Gonzalez, of Texas. Thanks to their efforts, we now have a clearer picture of how this disaster came about. It's a picture not just of a mistaken policy ineptly applied but of one that was corrupted almost from the outset by secrecy, arrogance, and misguided pragmatism—a policy that ultimately betrayed the very values it was intended to protect.

American courtship of Saddam Hussein began during the spring of 1980, when Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's national-security adviser, struggling to bring some order to a Persian Gulf policy that had been devastated by the fall of the Shah of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, observed publicly that "Iraq wishes a secure Persian Gulf, and we do not feel that American-Iraq relations need to be frozen in antagonism." The rapprochement had a certain logic: though Saddam's regime was extremely repressive at home, and though it had long been an especially virulent foe of Israel, it was now all that stood between Ayatollah Khomeini's Iranian revolution and the fragile oil fields of the Gulf. When, that September, Saddam invaded Iran, he had good reason to believe that the United States would offer no opposition.

During the Reagan Administration, when it seemed for a time that Iran might actually defeat Iraq, American acquiescence in Saddam's policies turned to active support. The full extent of our "tilt" toward Iraq remained secret, however—in part to maintain an international façade of impartiality but mostly to escape opposition in Congress. As the war dragged on, the C.I.A. and the Defense Department began sharing intelligence, including highly classified satellite photographs, with the Iraqi military, diverting at least some of it through Jordan and Saudi Arabia to avoid congressional scrutiny. And Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are reported to have obliged the Administration by secretly shipping American weapons to Iraq. In February, 1982, the Administration removed Iraq from its list of nations supporting terrorism—at a time, as members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee pointed out in an angry protest, when Abu Nidal himself had his main office in Baghdad—and thereby cleared the way for economic aid. Soon the Administration was making use of the Export-Import Bank, the Commodity Credit Corporation, and other government agencies to funnel billions of dollars' worth of subsidies and credits into Saddam's cash-starved and financially weakened regime. On at least two occasions, Vice-President Bush intervened directly to exert pressure on reluctant bank officials to approve loans they had already turned down.

When Bush was elected President, in November, 1988, it might have seemed a natural moment to reëvaluate United States policy toward Iraq. Three months earlier, the war had ended in a ceasefire that left Iran defeated, exhausted, and in no position to threaten American interests in the Gulf. As for Saddam,

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although his country had taken on a vast debt, he had not decreased his purchases of weapons when the war ended but had stepped them up, and was building by far the most formidable armed force in the region. And, to the outrage of much of the world, he had sent his troops to carry out a massacre against his own Kurdish minority.

Still, the American money continued to flow. When Congress tried to apply sanctions as a punishment for Saddam's use of chemical weapons against the Kurds, the new Administration, aided by the agriculture lobbies and supporters of other interests that had benefitted from Baghdad's lavish spending of United States money, fought off the sanctions bill, contenting itself with pro-forma verbal protests. In 1988 and 1989, Iraq received more than two billion dollars in credits from the Department of Agriculture. And in August, 1989, F.B.I. agents raiding the Atlanta branch of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro seized evidence that Iraqi officials had engaged in fraud involving these loans, illegally diverting the money and the commodities they subsidized to "third parties" in exchange for weapons. Most disturbing of all, investigators reported that some of the loan money might have secretly been used "to procure nuclear-related equipment."

Confronted with what could be a huge scandal, the Administration apparently sought to slow, or even disable, the investigation. Moreover, in October, 1989, after Iraq's Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz, met with Secretary of State James Baker and angrily complained about the Banca Lavoro investigation, Baker called the Secretary of Agriculture and pressed him to extend the Iraqis a billion dollars in *additional* credits. And that same month President Bush pointedly reaffirmed his policy of support for Iraq, signing National Security Directive 26, a top-secret document that ordered all agencies of the government to increase and strengthen economic and political ties with Iraq—in order, as Bush later put it, "to bring [Saddam] into the family of nations through commerce."

Throughout 1990, while Saddam Hussein took increasingly provocative and threatening actions—delivering a vehemently anti-American speech in Amman in February, publicly threatening five weeks later to burn half of Israel with poison gas, and then, in late July, sending tens of thousands of troops toward Kuwait—the Administration adhered doggedly to the line set out by the President's directive. At the end of May, according to the Los Angeles *Times*, senior officials meeting in the White House Situation Room discussed whether the President should send Saddam "a strong, personal warning" but decided against it. Even as the Iraqi troops massed on the Kuwaiti frontier, the American Ambassador, April Glaspie, was assuring Saddam that the President had instructed her "to broaden and to deepen our relations with Iraq."

When the Iraqis crossed the border, and the failure of the American policy was evident for all to see, President Bush reacted with all the indignation of a suitor scorned, and all the fury of one who had finally recognized that in pressing his suit he had drastically compromised our interests. He hadn't simply "tilted" toward Saddam; he had appeased him. Soon the President was denouncing the ungrateful dictator more loudly than any of his own critics in Congress had done, and listing the offenses—the use of chemical arms, the unending accumulation of weapons, the program to build a nuclear bomb, even the invasion of Iran—that he had pointedly ignored at the time when a strong American protest might have made some difference. Not surprisingly, Saddam's response to the President's sudden turnabout was incomprehension and rage, for during a decade of extensive contacts with Washington nothing whatever had occurred that could have led him to expect it.

"Well, we tried the peaceful route," President Bush remarked as allied planes bombed Baghdad. "We tried working with him [Saddam] and changing [him] through contact. . . . The lesson is clear in this case—that that didn't work." And yet in the entire sorry history of American-Iraqi relations there is little or no evidence of any attempt to use the increased American support of Saddam to effect a change in his regime. No limits were set; no standards were upheld. If anything, our behavior throughout the decade should have convinced the Iraqis that any profession of American principles was so much empty air. Again and again, depredations by the Iraqis were met by the Americans with weakness and winks. If this was a policy of realpolitik, then it was a singularly incompetent one—based more on self-delusion than on fact.

When the President asserted that "the lesson is clear" he was ignoring the real lessons in the affair—lessons that we had failed to learn many times before. Discounting the way dictators behave in their own countries cannot form the basis for a "realistic" foreign policy, because all too often their brutality and unpredictability toward their own people will come to characterize their behavior abroad as well. And attempting to escape the scrutiny of Congress and other parties legitimately engaged in the forming of American policy is counterproductive, because it encourages a fortress mentality and an inability to admit mistakes, and inevitably leads to decisions that are based on wishes, not reality. Too frequently, such decisions come to light only after some debacle, and the result is cynicism and malaise on the part of the public, whose leaders, while professing to take American principles seriously, have contrived to sell them short at every turn.

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Splurge

SO there's this husband and wife, and one day they decide to go to Saks Fifth Avenue. They walk over to the store and end up in designer handbags. Before you know it, the wife is checking out the merchandise. Right away, the husband's getting nervous. Suddenly, he notices this pleasant-looking gray-haired woman behind the counter. This woman, believe it or not, happens to be Judith Leiber, the most famous designer of designer handbags, who is making an in-store appearance with her fall collection. For those of you who just recently fell off the turnip truck, a Leiber handbag is tiny, rhine-

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stone-encrusted, and shaped like something cute—maybe a bird, or a panda, or a butterfly, or an egg—and is also, we mean to tell you, not cheap. A Leiber panda, say, runs three thousand bucks. Anyhow, the wife falls in love with the panda and then takes a deep interest in an egg bag, too, so the husband starts hyperventilating. Maybe she's a new wife, maybe she's an old wife—what's the difference? He just knows she's getting hung up on these three-thousand-dollar little handbags and he's going to have to do something quick. Finally, the husband—he's sweating now—says to Mrs. Leiber, "Hey, look, if I buy two, would I get a special price?"

Mrs. Leiber looks him in the eye and says, "No, but we would thank you very nicely."

O.K., O.K., so there's a priest, a rabbi, and— No, seriously, there's a reporter who walks into Saks Fifth Avenue this same day and heads over to the Judith Leiber counter, jots down a few notes about the handbags, and then goes up to Mrs. Leiber and says, "Listen, I was wondering. You were born in Hungary and learned to make handbags there, and then came to this country in 1947 and went into the handbag industry in New York, and then started your own company in 1963, designing and manufacturing luxury evening bags that have become the must-have status object for certain women, and you have fans who own dozens and dozens of your designs, including a fan in New Orleans who lent fifty of her Leibers for a show at the New Orleans Museum of Art a few years ago. But what I was wondering was: What sort of handbag do you carry?"

So Mrs. Leiber looks at the reporter and says, "One of my own, of course. Either that or a paper bag. And I won't carry a paper bag, so you figure it out."

But seriously, now—another husband and wife come up to the counter. The wife is going crazy for the handbags, and the husband is doing the death grip on his wallet when he notices Mrs. Leiber. So he says to her, "Are you Mrs. Leiber? I've long been an admirer of yours."

Mrs. Leiber says to him, "Oh, really?"

The husband says, "Actually, my wife more than me."

Mrs. Leiber says, "That's good. You shouldn't be carrying handbags. You're not the type."

Could you die?

All right, it's the same afternoon, and this skinny woman in thigh-high boots and a baggy sweatshirt comes up to the counter. She's here to meet Mrs. Leiber, but also she decided when she woke up this morning that life is short and, God willing, today she's going to splurge and buy a Judith Leiber pillbox. The pillboxes are also tiny and rhinestone-encrusted and shaped like pandas and what have you. Anyhow, this hippie type is looking at the pillboxes, and she says to the saleswoman, "Do you have any pillboxes that are bigger? I mean, these are exquisite, but I need something bigger, because I take a lot of vitamins."

So the saleswoman says to her, "We do have one shaped like an egg, which holds quite a lot."

Mrs. Sweatshirt-and-Thigh-Highs looks at her and says, "Hey, maybe I should just *eat* an egg. That way I wouldn't need the vitamins *or* the pillbox!"

You cannot make this stuff up.

O.K., now, the afternoon is rolling along, and Mrs. Leiber is the center of attention—some Japanese women have their picture taken with her, and a lot of Saks brass come to pay their respects, because, after all, she's got a lot of real estate on the first floor. Are you still with us? So two young women in those it-wasn't-enough-for-me-to-have-a-lovely-husband-and-children-I-had-to-have-a-*career* suits come up to Mrs. Leiber, and one of them says, "Mrs. Leiber, you make me so happy. I want to thank you for doing what you do."

Mrs. Leiber looks at her and says, "Please. Don't thank me. Buy."

The other young woman says, "Mrs. Leiber, I just love coming to see your bags. It's like going to a museum."

Mrs. Leiber looks at her and says, "Sweetie, you have it all wrong. Believe me. These are to own, not to be in a museum."

Did you hear, by the way, the one about the Leiber pig bag? This is one of her new designs—a fat little pig covered with pink rhinestones, hinged at the haunches, and with a grin on his face. Hey, you'd be grinning, too, if you cost three thousand dollars, right? Anyway, the pig is the big hit of the day. One woman picks it up and

"Mr. Perot states, 'It's time to take out the trash and clean out the barn.' Agree or disagree?"

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says, "I've got to have this, even if it's *trayf*." Another one says, "Take a look at this, he's even got cloven hooves. Is that biologically right?" Another one finally puts her MasterCard where her mouth is. She picks up the pink pig and hands it and her card to the saleswoman standing next to Mrs. Leiber and says, "My husband's going to kill me, but I'm going to die if I don't get this, so, the way I see it, I'm going to go one way or the other, right?"

The saleswoman takes the pig and the credit card, and then she pulls Mrs. Leiber over for a private moment and says, "Mrs. Leiber, this pink pig is just a sample. Maybe we should keep it."

Mrs. Leiber looks at her, looks at the pig, looks at the customer, looks back at the saleswoman, rolls her eyes, catches her breath, and finally says, "Darling, *please*. Don't give me a heart attack. Sell the pig. There's more where that came from."

Revolutionary

Radio Free Bayonne went on the air the other morning. Its broadcast day lasted about three minutes; its broadcast range was about the width of a single city block, or from the back of a loft, on Lispenard Street, all the way to its front, on Canal; and its programming consisted of our old friend Alex Melamid saying things like "Hello? You can hear it? O.K. Is Radio Free Bayonne, broadcasting world revolution." After that, Alex ended the programming day—remarking off mike, "Ought to be humming here. Bayonne National Anthem. Or 'Internationale.' Something. How it goes?"—and went to lunch with us, at a cafeteria around the corner, to tell us about his discovery of Sears, his recent trip to Russia, and his plans for fomenting a world revolution along Bolshevik lines.

Alex is, of course, half of the Russian-émigré conceptual-art team of Komar & Melamid, whom we have dropped in on from time to time over the years. When last we visited Alex, he and Vitaly Komar had established a studio in Bayonne, where they soon found out that the industrial revolution had only just happened in America, and established a school—the School of Bayonne—to evolve a true form of social realism to picture it with. Since then, Komar & Melamid have had two major experiences: they have discovered, in New Jersey, the Sears chain of department stores, and Alex has decided, at a moment when everybody else seems to be running in the opposite direction, to become a radical Marxist.

"It seems unconnected—Sears and Marx. But is not," Alex said over lunch. "You need to understand Sears realism in order to understand what went wrong in Russia. Has been series of unfolding revelations, like path to Finland Station. First, we discover Sears. Amazing places! Where have these been for all our time in America? Entering in the basement, smell of popcorn, everything dark. Wood panelling. A whole palette of Sears colors: avocado, off-white, mahogany. Suddenly we realize—this is *true* American realism. Sears realism! This is what real capitalist consumer society looks like. Not Pop art. Pop art was the social realism of capitalism. Everything beautified. Comics in bright colors, enormous beautiful faces. Is like comparing Soviet workers to paintings of Soviet workers. Is the lie. So we put together a show of Sears-realist images. Hang it in the SoHo gallery. Sell the 'pieces.' Whole absurd business.

"At the same time, I decide to become Marxist. Communist! It's only real option. Right now, America has become last ideological society. We used to have real capitalism—*Sears* capitalism. Sears makes *Kenmore* goods—washer-dryers, top-loading, harvest gold and avocado. Beautiful! Now we have purely ideological capitalism. Imagine! Donald Trump has no money—has less money than me now—but when he goes bankrupt banks pay him! Banks are thinking ideologically: Trump is millionaire; millionaires have money; is our job to give money to Trump. Exactly like old Soviet Union. Same logic: We are Communists; Communists rule workers and proletariat; is up to us to

"Thank you very much, but I'm more than satisfied with my present long-distance carrier."

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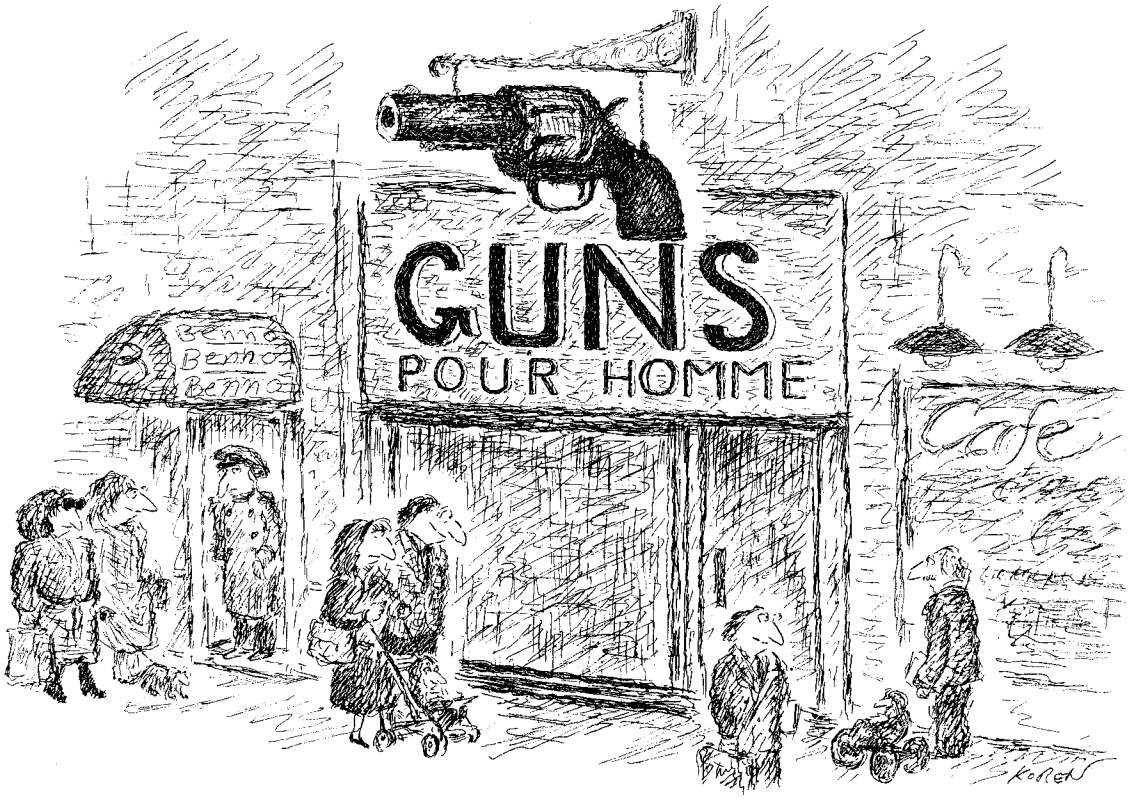

create proletariat for us to rule. This is twentieth-century ideological thinking. See it in conceptual art, *Pravda*, *Forbes* magazine.

"So one wing of the School of Bayonne decided to revive Lenin's old newspaper, *Iskra*—'Spark'! Was the real revolutionary newspaper. Now they produced Issue No. 52. And our wing decided to start Radio Bayonne—is real revolutionary station. Komar's wing isn't involved; still believes in reform. We ordered a transmitter from Canada. Imagine—is illegal to buy that transmitter in this country! F.C.C. is K.G.B., controls everything that counts. So for time being I just use little FM setup. Kenmore revolution."

Alex started to pour a little sugar from a standard-issue glass sugar shaker into his coffee. He stopped to admire the shaker, holding it up to his eyes. "Look at—how you call this?—*fluting* on this sugar. It's a column—nineteenth-century neoclassicism." He shook his head and put the shaker down. "O.K. That comes into story, too. Last month, I go back to Russia. Second stay in fifteen years. *Nothing has changed.* Takes me days to realize why: *Is still a Marxist society.* Only, now is Marx's vision of *capitalism* they are trying to realize, instead of Marx's vision of socialism. Is pure Marxist capitalism they are trying to practice. Has no relation to real capitalism, in Germany or Japan or anywhere. Pure Marxist Kapitalism—with 'K.' Survival of fittest; sweat them out; each for himself. O.K. So I'm there, and I run into couple of friends from New York. Everybody over there. They invite me to visit at the hotel. Big hotel—hotel on Stolichnaya vodka bottle. Did you know that was a hotel? *Great* hotel, but off limits when I am growing up. Birth of postmodernism, that hotel. Here's the story: They send architects, plans to Stalin for big hotel with two towers. One is decorated so, one is decorated differently. Let Great Helmsman choose! Stalin just signs plans—'Stalin.'" Alex mimed Stalin signing the plans. "So they don't know which one. They build one tower in one style, one tower in the other style. With one signature, Stalin invents postmodern architecture.

"Anyway, this is hotel kept for *nomenklatura.* Only Communist big shots go there. So I'm curious—what's it really like? I go over, I get in the elevator, and I go up to the fourth floor—that's where the big lobby is. I'm sniffing. Something *familiar* here. Have been here before. And yet it's secret world. Then I walk into the lobby. Is covered with dark panelling. All around—bars and everything—*Formica.* Formica surfaces everywhere. Suddenly, I realize: *Is Sears!* Luxury style reserved for Party officials—it's Sears style! Must have been redone in forties, after the war. Secret world of high Soviet officials is department of Sears! This is big discovery. What do they call in physics? *Fundamental* discovery. One style connects privileged class in America, which is middle class, with privileged class in Russia, which is *Party* class. Sears style.

"Then, right there in the lobby, right in the middle of vodka hotel, I see it. What's this style? It's *nineteenth-century* style. Just a stylization of nineteenth-century idea of luxury—same at Sears, same in hotel, same everywhere. *No one wants to live in twentieth century.* That's my revelation. Look around!" Alex waved a hand around at the dim cafeteria. "Look! All conceptual versions of nineteenth century here: Tiffany lamps, ceiling fans, sugar container with classical fluting. Look at ketchup bottle. What's the date on it?"

We picked up the ketchup bottle on the table. It said "Estbl. 1869."

"You see," Alex said triumphantly. "Sears style is an attempt to keep nineteenth century, where everybody wants to live, alive in twentieth century, where *nobody* wants to live. That's why it's secret style of inner Party—*that* was their secret. So now we realize what Radio Free Bayonne is broadcasting for. Not twenty-first-century revolution. *Twentieth*-century revolution. Revolution that never happened. Here it is, end of twentieth century, and we are all still living in nineteenth. So we must make and build and complete twentieth-century revolution in next eight years. Is big job. Fortunately, we have radio station."

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POLTERGEISTS

THE other evening, after talking on the phone with my daughter, Nora, who lives in Rome, I walked over to the Mexican place, the nearest restaurant to my apartment, where I had a narrow escape—I almost stepped into a deeply strange, forgotten, familiar world. I stopped on the threshold, looking in at the stucco room hung with striped rugs and dusty sequin-trimmed sombreros; it was early, but the place was packed, unnaturally so, and the mood was wrong—not loud but still too keyed up. Then I saw why the restaurant seemed to have shrunk: all the patrons were high-school kids. They looked gigantic; even the girls appeared to need a place with higher ceilings and more commodious chairs. They weren't braying or throwing food or dropping their pants or anything; in the intense attitudes that were normal for them, they were eating burritos. I backed out. Moments later, when I came to, I was strolling toward the Thai place, remembering a lost time, my children's high-school days.

In 1985, I was still living in New Jersey in the house Willie and I had bought when the kids were small, and when Zack and Nora got into their senior and junior years the three of us were suddenly agitated and constantly struggling to appear serene. I was alone. That's what it felt like: I'm living alone, with only my adolescent children and our hair-trigger adrenal glands. The epinephrine was cycling through our nervous systems with no outlet. Since Nora and Zack had started high school, there had been a few occasions when I went over the top and screamed. It only came on once or twice a year, and afterward I was ground down by ordinary guilt. Still, I understood perfectly the state of mind of the parents who shrieked and frothed daily, tried to rip the earrings out of their children's ears, and rolled around with the kids in mortal combat on the rug. With even the most hysterical of the parents of teen-agers I knew, I felt a sort of tender affiliation: they had been blindfolded and poked until maddened; they were flying, on an adrenaline high that couldn't be contained.

Mornings were O.K. In the mornings, things were normal, with the indefinable heightened quality we were getting used to: supranormal, metanormal. Zack and Nora were glossily beautiful, standing in the kitchen in pure ringing silence, conserving their deep reserves of energy. Zack's breakfast was four pieces of toast and a quart of milk; Nora's was a Diet Coke. Every few days I squeezed oranges and carried the glasses of juice to their bedrooms, where they were blow-drying their marvellous hair. *Oh, thanks*, they'd call patiently, through the dryers' roar. While I watched, they'd take a sip.

That year, I was really busy. I spent a fair number of evenings going out with my women friends, all of us wearing our earrings, and suits with big shoulders, and being glamorous, irrepressible modern American divorcées together, then straggling home. And I was still working full-time at a training school for bad boys (breaking and entering, assault with intent, car thefts), a place where I had a role to play that was simple and made sense: I was trying to teach kids to read. On my way to work I'd drop my own kids at the high school and I'd watch as they crossed the lawn; they looked dynamic but pacific—they were washed to a shine, arrayed in calculated, shabby, sexy black. I had a persistent, weird feeling: I couldn't prove it, but I thought that those were not my children. The crossing guard looked like the same guy he had always been. But the kids had been replaced by Martians.

Daytime was the Martian time, when all the normal stuff happened. Graciously, they did the usual things: Nora did gymnastics, and Zack played his guitar; they were both lacrosse players, student-council representatives, actors, and members of the Black Literature Club. After school, Zack worked at a health-food restaurant, making sandwiches invented during the sixties; Nora helped run a theatre program for tiny children, walking the kids to the bathroom, tying their masks onto their little faces, restraining the biter. If I got home late from work, the house would already be thumping, a giant heartbeat in the walls—Nora's Jane Fonda video. This was still daytime. Nora and Zack were doing the well-known, complicated adolescent impersonation of people fully engaged with the daytime things. In fact, everything happened at night.

They were going to concerts. Some Saturdays, they set out in the morning and rode long distances, to faraway venues. Hours before the show, there'd be a city of cars in the parking lot, and packs of young people in the late sun and then in the gathering darkness, lurching around and handling each other, and buying and selling and consuming loose joints, pills, the standard seductive killer drugs, and a fluid called Liquid Lady. Nora and Zack told me about these events. Of course I asked, Did their friends drink and take drugs? Zack had long been a master of the noncommittal amiable remark. He said, "The bottles to beware of are the ones that look like cologne."

Other Saturdays, they stayed home. After dinner they walked around their rooms for three hours, dressing and phoning. At ten, scrubbed as if for surgery and artfully got up, they rushed out. At two, hoarse and depleted, they staggered home.

At parties, muscular, stoic boys would kneel and take a piece of tubing deep into their mouths and tip their heads back like sword-swallowers, and their friends would pour whole beers through a motor-oil funnel, straight down their throats. Girls did it, too—Nora reported that when this happened she sometimes left the room. This was dangerous, I said; drinking like that, those boys could get very sick. "Get sick?" Zack said. "Actually, Mom, that's pretty euphemistic. They could die." I planned to call the parents of the beer-swallowers, to inform them. Which parents would you single out, the kids said. It happens all the time. Please, Mom. It's the least of it.

"Mom," Zack said. "Here's a typical incident, but you can't do any phoning."

"What is it?" I said.

"We can't tell you these things if you start talking about calling people."

"What is it?"

"Is it about Benjy?" Nora asked, starting to laugh. "Oh, it's ridiculous! It's nothing, Mom."

"*What?*"

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They were laughing so happily, so healthily. They pounded each other, stamped their feet, wiped their eyes. They both cried, "*Benjy drank three beers through his nose!*"

ZACK's girlfriend, Bibi, looked as much like Nora as somebody else could—a sexier, ruder Nora, in muddy cowboy boots. In the daytime, Bibi smelled like a puppy—she was working after school for a veterinarian, planning to become one. She liked to tell long, bloody, oddly arousing stories about veterinarian life. Bibi was very beautiful and sloppy. I was jealous of her. The first time she came to our house, she immediately picked up our cat, pressed him to her, and licked his fur; Zack sat down suddenly, as if to avoid swooning. Now, whenever she had a chance, Bibi would come over and stay for many hours, with her jeans straining to cover her strong, elegant legs. She would slip off the boots and lie down with her feet in Zack's lap. Then she would fondle the cat in several remarkably inventive ways, and Zack would watch her. She drove me nuts.

Nora suddenly got a boyfriend—a deep-voiced guy named Mark. He was less annoying than Bibi—shallower, less clever, and not around much. I kind of liked him, and he may have kind of liked me. A sophomore, he was already planning to be a surgeon. On our first meeting, I asked how he knew that for sure, and he said sonorously, "I have a special aptitude," and wiggled his fingers. He grinned. Nora blushed horribly. We all stared at Mark's jiggling, dexterous hands.

I had a boyfriend myself; that is to say, there was someone I'd been seeing since a few months after Willie and I divorced. Steven and I weren't by any means in love, but we were certainly old enough to be placid together, reasonably happy in the way recommended by best-selling books: we didn't expect too much. The only thing I had ever tried to change about him was early on, when I made him cut back on the after-shave.

Steven stayed over on the Saturdays he didn't have his son with him. Every other Sunday morning he drove out and bought eight bagels, and he and I ate two of them in the wonderful silence, and by the time the kids stumbled from their beds he had usually gone home. "Where's Dome?" they said. (His only unusual physical characteristic was a slightly over-rounded forehead, and you really had to be paying attention to notice it.) Once a month or so, he'd still be there when they woke, and they'd say things like "Hi, Steve. Thanks for the bagels—these six bagels as well as the last nine hundred bagels."

"If you lie down with pugs, you wake up with pugs."

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ON a back road late on Halloween night, driving home from a party at about ninety miles an hour, two kids rolled a car. They climbed out, stood up, vomited on their ghost costumes, and walked away in the moonlight. After that, some parents of partygivers started making all the guests sleep at their houses so they wouldn't drive home drunk; when you arrived at the party you had to surrender your car keys before you could repair to the keg or upend the bottle through your nose. Zack didn't have his driver's license yet; Bibi did. Zack and Bibi and Nora got in the habit of pretending that they'd been driven by someone else, and in the middle of the night, after everybody had fallen down on the mattresses, they'd slip out and meet on the lawn and run for Bibi's car and make their getaway. The three of them would drive out to the diner, comb their smoky hair, eat platters of scrambled eggs, and, when they felt coherent enough, drive on home.

"Do any of these parents happen to refuse to serve alcohol?" I asked once, kind of wearily.

Zack said that the parents didn't serve marijuana and cocaine, but that inhospitality had virtually no impact on events.

"*Cocaine*? Is that a *common* thing?"

He looked at me absently. He said it was a pain, because cocaine traditionally happens in the bathroom, so anytime you wanted to go to the bathroom you had to go out in the yard.

Nora laughed. "It's really true!" she said. "Julie comes to be lookout."

"So what would happen if no alcohol was served? Would anybody go to the party?"

"Sure," they said. "It happens. Everybody goes."

"And then nobody drinks?"

Zack said, "People bring vodka and drink it in cups of tea."

"I don't want you to drink and drive!"

"We never do," they said. "Are you crazy?"

"Do you smoke joints?"

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"Mom," they said kindly, holding my gaze.

"I don't want you to drink or smoke at all."

"We know that, Mom. We know *you don't.*"

MY pal Annie came over to have tea and talk about our lives—what we used to do, what we would do later, when all this was over. Annie's daughter was a Saturday gymnast, like Nora; her son worked alongside Zack at Tempting Treats, squeezing the carrots, massing the sprouts in the pitas, melting the Monterey Jack—killing a little of their enormous surplus of time. Annie and I had been banking on these pursuits to keep the kids safe. In fact, Annie had gone further—had got her former husband to ante up a lot of support money to keep their kids in the private day school instead of the public school. So we considered her children marginally safer than mine: they were receiving *individual attention.* Now Annie and I sat in the dining room with the teapot in its ineffectual little cozy, giving each other keen looks. Zack was in his room. His door was closed, and through the door came, instead of sound, the usual waves of sexual energy pouring into the house and agitating the air. I imagined him in there finishing his college essays, desperately pulling on his hair. "Probably not his hair," Annie said glumly. She said she used to worry that when they reached high school they'd start having lots of sex—dangerous, fifties sex—and that would be traumatic, and now there was AIDS, which was unimaginably worse. Still, if they wore their condoms and chose their partners carefully, she had decided, the safest illicit activity currently available to the kids was making love. "At least while they're having sex they can't be driving the car a hundred miles an hour," she said.

Passing the dining room, Nora called pleasantly, "Why can't they?"

AFTER an eventful New Year's Eve, when Zack got his butt squeezed by a mystery girl, and also underwent a conversion and rededication to academic excellence, he devoted eighteen consecutive nights to studying for his third round of S.A.T.s, like somebody possessed. Then he and Nora stayed over with friends and came home on Saturday morning gray and staring. Here's what they said:

We watched "Love Connection." Then "The People's Court"—a case about a beagle and some rat poison. Then the five-o'clock news—Lou Gossett was on. Then "World News Tonight"—we love it. Reagan was real happy down in Mexico, shaking hands with the Mexican President. Then we got souvlaki and took it to the party. We left early and went back to Holly's mom's and watched "The Shining." Then "Repo Man" came on. Then Robbie said "I'm Robertson Parson Shattuck III" about forty times and tiptoed out and tried to walk on the edge of the upper terrace with his eyes closed and fell onto the bluestone lower terrace and broke his arm. Then we took him to the emergency room and waited for his dad, and his dad rode over in his Jaguar with his Haitian driver. Then two guys from the high school came in; they had been beaten up and their faces were meat. Then "Tom and Jerry." Then morning came.

"Then what happened?" I asked.

Zack: "Sun came up."

AS the year progressed, the parties seemed to grow more drastic, more extreme. Shooting the Boot was introduced—each guest gulped a sneakerful, out of the host's high-top. Vomiting, of course, was perennially big: the Technicolor yawn, riding the porcelain bus, talking to Ralph on the big white phone. Urination was big: a kid named Soup liked to go into the bathroom immediately and piss into the shampoo. One couple or another always had to have a fight, and one or both of the lovers had to run out of the house, and maybe the girl would key-scratch the guy's car. There was always the abused guy. There was always the depressed girl who pulled guys seriatim into a bedroom or closet. Something valuable always had to get broken. If, as could happen, the parents were fools enough to leave town, everybody showed up, and then there'd be the trashed house and weird things going around in the dryer, and maybe the whole population of the high school outside on the deck, some of them mid-urination when the deck fell down.

Nora didn't drink. She reported that a boy had asked, When did you stop? I never drank, she said. Never? Unsteadily, he held out his big strong feverish hand for a crunching handshake. He nodded sagely. He said, *I'm very impressed.*

Some narcs came to school. Nora

"I'm Kevin, brought to you by the miracle of birth."

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said that the narcs—a man and a woman—were wearing amazing disguises: bell-bottoms, fringed vests, *hair*. They looked about thirty-five. Nora claimed the narcs had sidled up and asked where to buy "stuff," and she'd said, "Officers, I have no idea."

In fact, you could buy your drugs in the auditorium. Or outside the gym, against the wall, where the regular daytime dope-smokers stood dreaming. Every Friday, a blue van pulled up behind the gym, and the dealers, three seniors—Jason, George, and Robbie—ran out, got in, and in two turns around the block bought the school's supplies for the week. From Nora, their pal, I got a clear impression of the dealers: Robbie was a neglected, handsome, depressed rich boy; George was a gentle, skinny, cocaine-dependent poor boy; and Jason was a hardened criminal.

I made an appointment with the principal. He was a tall fellow, always as precisely turned out as one of his students, as clean-shaven as a person can be. The skin of his cheeks shone like a baby's, and he had a baby's clear, guiltless eyes. When I arrived, he turned this face toward me and looked pleasant. "What are you doing about the drug problem?" I said, and he held his pleasing expression. "Please sit down," he said. As for the narcotics, the administration was aware, they were paying steadily close attention, there'd been marked improvement, hopes were high. "A van comes every week to sell dope," I said. He said he wasn't at liberty to say publicly what was being done about that possibility. "Have you considered stopping it?" I said. "That seems pretty straightforward."

It wasn't that simple, he said amicably.

"It *is* that simple. You pick up the phone, you dial, you tell the cops. They drive out and they arrest the drug dealers."

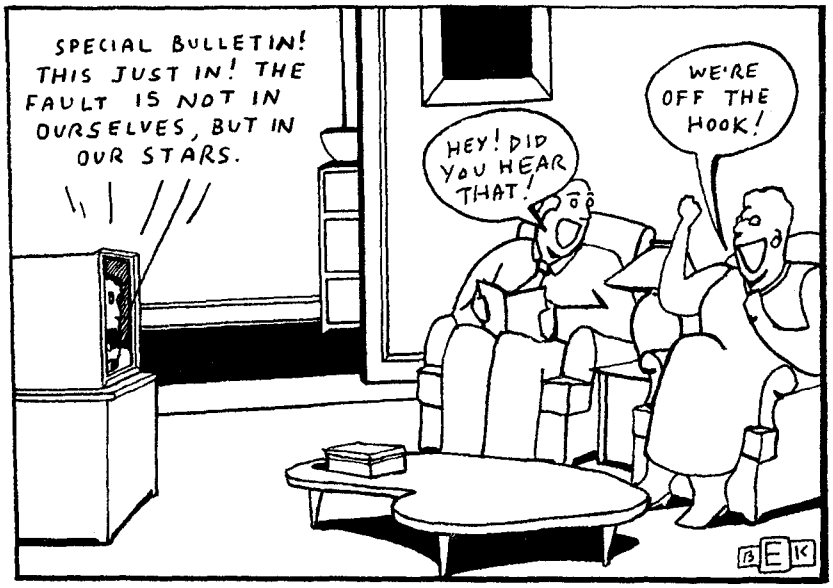
This was a community of very concerned parents, he said. It was a community full of resources.

"I don't get it."

We gazed at each other with hatred.

He said that no parent in this community—perhaps, and he certainly thought so, myself included—would want to see the future of any local student jeopardized by what many might argue could be a very unnecessary police presence.

I said, "You mean Robbie Shattuck is too rich to bust."



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He told me that the concern of parents like me was a source of support and nourishment for the high-school administration, and he could only impress upon me that they were continuously at work on addressing the pressing problems facing us, not just narcotics-related, not just alcohol-related, not just violence-related, not just prejudice-related, but across the board. While saying this, he stood, and all the wrinkles fell out of his suit. He said some more. Meanwhile, I imagined him studious in cruel bathroom light, scraping the razor time and again over his cowardly face. I lunged across the desk and we shook hands—our hands were wet. He promised to keep me and people like me apprised. At last we gave up and said a brief, loud, disgusted goodbye, like lovers who were sickened to recall they had ever shared a moment.

STEVEN turned forty-five and started bringing in a lot more money. He began to mutter about changing his already extremely rewarding life. His son was ten, so he had energy for this remaking—I was bitter about that and laughed a lot. The result of his deliberations was, for somebody in his situation, an ordinary one: he upgraded from a Honda to a metallic Porsche. Whenever he came over, the kids looked for new ways to compliment him on the phallic nature of his choice: "*Commanding*," they'd say. "*Potent. Really smooth and rounded.*" Steven and I shared friendly sex, a desire to be with another person, and a talent for not causing trouble—was there more? This year I had been surprised to develop, by imperceptible increments, an awareness that Steven and I might actually part; I couldn't face it. Meanwhile, every other Saturday night the new Porsche stood all night in the driveway, gleaming, solid, dependable, a still point in a shifting universe.

ZACK, to Nora, when he thought I was out: "It's stifling. It's stifling here. It's so *stifling* living in this house! There's not enough air in this house to support life!"

NORA wanted to go to Florida with her boyfriend. "You've got to be kidding," I said. She said, "That is *not* a nice tone." I was drawing some flash cards for school, using basketball terms and the names of Knicks. I printed "HOOK SHOT."

Her boyfriend had two plane tickets to Fort Myers and an uncle's empty condo on Captiva Island. I said that was economical but cut no ice with me.

She said, "Well, I want to go."

"Ask your father," I said. Saying this gave me a tiny, standard sort of thrill: let *him* deal with it. Wreck *his* week. Nora snorted—she and Willie were getting along badly. She was secretly not talking to him; that is, technically she spoke with him, but meanwhile she knew she was only pretending to speak.

While I printed "FOUL LINE," "FAST BREAK," "TOUCH PASS," and "RORY SPARROW," Nora explained my philosophy to me: that I took the position

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that they had to make their own decisions, always balancing their decisions against my concerns and feelings, that that's how we'd arrived at their curfews, that's how we'd arranged things for years—I trusted them. This was no different. I said, "Well, my feelings are very strong. I don't want you to go."

"Excuse me, Mom, but I think that's kind of hypocritical."

"And why is that?"

"Because Mark is already my boyfriend, and we're not going to do"—ominously—"anything in Florida that we *can't do here.*"

That didn't matter, I said, even if true, which I doubted: what mattered was the intensity of the honeymoon-like situation, the five days alone, my sense that although I didn't need to intervene in their inevitable sexual life, I did need to make my own statement about precisely what my hopes and, yes, I said bravely, my expectations were for her, and what my own values continued to be, and so on. I warmed to my topic and, hoping to gain the advantage, lavishly gesturing with my magic marker, jawed on.

"Well, I'm sorry, Mommy!" she said finally, and she began to cry.

"Why are you crying?"

"You're a wonderful mother," Nora squeaked. "And I really feel bad about this."

"There's no harm done," I said.

"I can see that you and me are going to have to have different views."

"We certainly do."

"I feel so bad. I hate to not do what you want!"

"I'm sure you'll do the right thing," I said.

"That's why I'm upset!"

"Why?"

She said miserably, "Because I'm going!" Then she dried her face and went to phone her friends to borrow their many infinitesimal iridescent G-string-based bathing suits.

I yelled after her, into the next room, "Don't you kids ever have any *real* problems?"

Nora, a week later, at dinner, apropos nothing: "Mom, I hate to say it. But I don't know what's wrong with you. It's like you're turning into a different person."

I NOW had, of course, a psychiatrist. My psychiatrist was cautious, stubborn, wily, deft, like somebody whose survival in a hostile world depended on extreme cunning and vigilance. It made sense: he was a Freudian—his type was supposed to have already vanished, like the theatre and Yiddish. His office contained a prominent couch, which I wouldn't consider lying on; a couple of kilims, like Freud's; a small card thanking the patients for not smoking; a tissue box decorated with kitty-cats entangled in their yarn balls. Early on, he had accidentally revealed that he loved Cheech and Chong, and then nothing for months. I had been talking to him all year: he appeared sometimes drowsy or faintly addled, sometimes alert; behind him the light falling through the window brightened, dimmed, brightened; the newest rug seemed to fade slightly; a humidifier joined us and the air grew moist. The most comforting thing my psychiatrist ever said to me, and it was extremely comforting, wasn't even a full sentence. He murmured, "The inevitable disquietude of spirit in a house where adolescents live."

ZACK was in "Three Sisters": a shortened version, cut by the drama teacher—three acts, fewer military men, and only half the pronouncements about life. The kids called it "Two and a Half Sisters." After the play's run, eight of the cast members came for dinner and sat at our round dining table wearing idiosyncratic and sexy clothes, flushed and attentive like a ring of children at a birthday party. I served a turkey, although it was February, and one bottle of California champagne for all of them—for a toast to Chekhov and themselves. When I brought in the platter, their dilated pupils shone and they all cried, "Turkey! My favorite food!" They pantomimed abject disbelief—all their lives, they'd only had turkey once a year. Vivaciously, they toasted the turkey, as if he were a pal. They all had to go to the bathroom constantly; each time, whoever left said goodbye to the turkey carcass. After dinner they drank many cups of tea. Then everybody strolled to the front door, and they all stood there and looked at Zack overintently while he said to me, "Oh, where is it, where has it all gone, my past, when I was young, gay, clever, when I dreamed and thought with grace, when my present and my future were lighted up with hope?" Then the others took turns thanking me with lines from "Two and a Half Sisters," tossed their hairdos, and rushed into the night. Zack went with them. This was a good moment. I stood on the step a long time, staring out into total darkness.

Steven was away for the weekend—no Porsche, no bagels. At midnight, after a video outing, Nora got home, looking sensible. Her planned mock-honeymoon was still three weeks away; we weren't talking about it. She had been lying low, leading a remarkably staid life. She seemed to be playing

DRAGONFLY RESERVE

The sign, in Central Park, announces
officially—as if the intention were enough
to draw damselflies and amberwings, clubtails
and civil bluets
out of thin air, or down from the Berkshires,
to dart and zimmer among these particular reeds.
It was posted, inconspicuously, in a cluster
of yellow irises:
I thought it would say "No Trespassing,"
or "Do Not Pick the Flowers."
And perhaps they do come there,
mysteriously, the way hummingbirds are attracted
to hummingbird feeders, and we need not know
what lures them—
whether pheromones, or habitat, or simply
the invitation.

—BARBARA JORDAN

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a character in an imaginary young person's novel: "Nora Green, Good High-School Girl." Now she pulled on her boxers, yanked back her hair, washed her face for half an hour, kissed me twice, and went to bed.

At two, Zack's expected arrival time, he wasn't home. I decided to read. At two-thirty, he wasn't home. At three, he wasn't home. At three-fifteen, the phone rang once, then stopped. At three-thirty, I heard Bibi's car slowly approaching, coasting in—she was driving with admirable care, and they were almost home. But they weren't. The car paused, then moved on. When I went to look out, it was gone. Empty street, in quiet darkness.

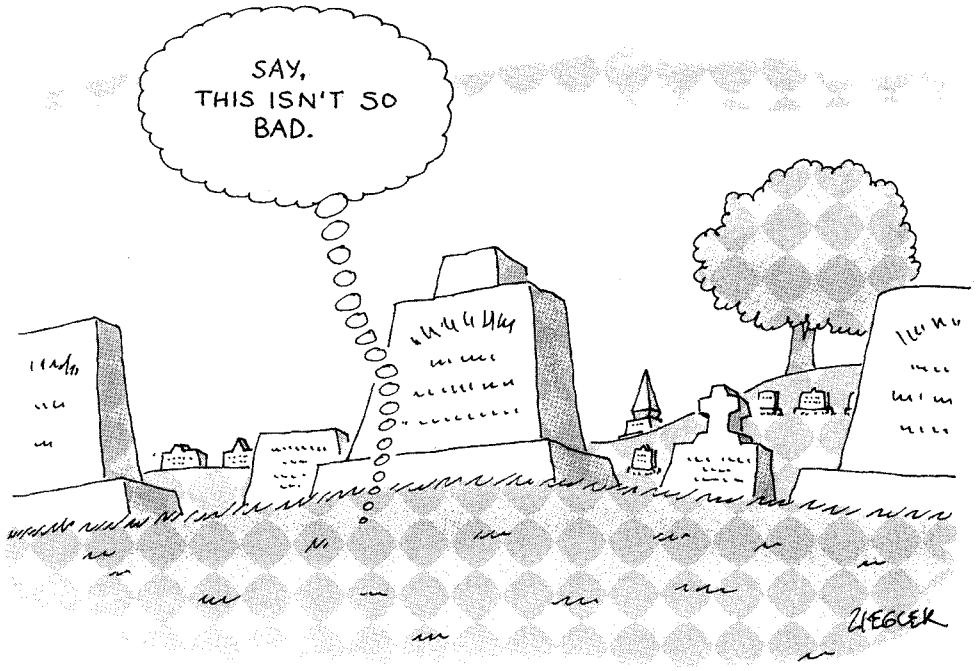
I thought I could call Willie and wake him, to say—what? I could call the parents of Zack's fellow-actors. Half an hour more, and I'd be willing to go that far.

I waited. I could wake Nora and ask her where Zack had planned to go. Of all the alternatives, that seemed preferable—waking a young person instead of some parents who, troubled, compromised, were still somehow managing in the middle of a Saturday night to catch a few pathetic winks. At four, I tapped at Nora's door, then tiptoed in. Her lamp was on, casting soft light on her tangled bed. Nora was gone.

I dialled Willie, let it ring. He was out. I enjoyed one moment of resentment, very brief and rich.

I phoned the parents.

Three of the actors were in their beds. Nora's boyfriend, Mark, wasn't in his bed. Bibi wasn't. Tim, the senior-class president, wasn't; Katya, the eager environmentalist, wasn't; Jessica, the mathematician, wasn't. Beebop, the boy with four earrings, wasn't. Holly, the girl with the shredded jeans and visible underpants, wasn't. Alan, the tall weight-lifting boy with the velvet hat, who was going into the Army, wasn't. It was four in the morning. Almost all the parents answered on the first ring; struggling to awaken, they were remarkably gracious, as if genuinely welcoming my call. None of them were curt with me, and none sounded at all resentful. They didn't sound as though they bore any resemblance to the parents I'd imagined encouraging crowds of future Ivy Leaguers to ingest beer through gas-station funnels and vomit onto their shoes. One couple, whom I'd never met, and whose son was home and sleeping, offered to come over and sit with me because I was a single parent. Two of the fathers offered to drive out and look, but we couldn't think where they should go. One of the fathers offered to go out, find them, and run them over with the car, and his wife and I laughed hysterically for a long time. Bibi's mother called the police, who had no information. Let's get off the phones, we said. Maybe they'll call.



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At six, in birdsong and rising light, they arrived. Nora slipped her key in the lock like a safecracker, slid the door open, and stepped in. Her lips were rosy and puffy, prominent in her ravaged face. "Oh Mom!" she said groggily. "Oh no! You're up!"

And I was also *really disappointed* and I was also *really mad*, I cried. How could they do this? Hadn't it occurred to them I'd be worried? What was in their minds? Half the parents in this town had been awake half the night! "*And I cannot believe not one of you had the consideration to call! It's absolutely incredible that—*"

"One of who?" she said.

"*All of you!*" I cried, and I stamped my foot in its fuzzy slipper. "*I have had it! I can't believe you guys would betray my trust like this! You go out there right now and tell Zack to send Bibi home and get in here!*"

She looked horribly confused. "What do you mean?" she said.

"What do *you* mean?"

"Isn't Zack here?" she said.

"Zack wasn't with you?" I said.

Pause. Tiny voice. "I was with Mark."

"What a surprise," I said. "But where is Zack?"

"Well, Mom, I'm sorry," she said. Then she added mildly, the way she had said the same thing to the hippie narcs, "I have no idea."

I recalled something funny the psychiatrist had said. The Kleenex box was over near the couch. Occasionally, sitting across the room, I threatened to sniffle, and then we both half rose and he shoved the box toward me through the empty air. Once, he murmured in consolation, while shoving the box, that a poltergeist was like a sort of ectoplasmic manifestation of adolescent libido.

"What?" I said.

"Poltergeist," he said.

I snuffled.

"The ghost that makes noises and throws plates off the shelves," he said.

I said damply, "Please. It's really not helping. I could use some *advice*."

He said, "Fine. Here it is: Put the babies up for adoption."

I WAS standing on the driveway in my bathrobe and coat, looking at the frosted lawn and the ascending sun, when Bibi's car, one fender crumpled, pulled in. Zack and Bibi got out and walked toward me slowly. They'd both been crying. One of Zack's shirtsleeves was torn off and wrapped around his arm as a bandage. He

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dropped Bibi's hand and put his arms around me, and for a moment I laid my head on his shoulder and hugged him back. "Oh, I hope you weren't worrying," he said softly. And he said that the line had been busy when they'd called last night—four tries and then they had thought it was too late.

I said that was ridiculous, I was furious at all of them, and where the hell had they been?

"Oh no. I hope you weren't up worrying," he said again.

Of course I had been, I said, and so had Bibi's mother. What had happened?

"Gee, I'm sorry." He looked exhausted, and so disheartened that it made me feel quiet. "Your sister has just taken all the flak for you," I said, but my heart wasn't in it. "What *happened*?"

He said to Bibi, "Will you come in with me?" When he reached to take her hand, she pulled it away—her palms were covered with little cuts. Inside, the cat threw himself against her legs, and she looked at him absently but didn't pick him up. We sat down, and they started telling their story moment by moment.

A long tangled night. Implausible, undoubtedly real events. It had taken on a life of its own—it *unfolded*. First they'd started to drive to Washington to see the Vietnam memorial—to show it to Alan, who'd been threatening for months to join the Army. They were going to call me from the road. Holly's father, a doctor, lived in Philadelphia, and she wanted to stop at his apartment to show Alan a photograph of him, taken twenty-five years earlier: her handsome young dad in green beret and full regalia, in Panama, in front of a grocery store, giving the camera his typical look of confidence. In two cars they drove down to Philadelphia. On South Street, Bibi's car got a flat. It seemed a little menacing—many guys in shadowy doorways. Bibi drove Holly's car to a phone and called me, but my line was busy.

Still in my coat, sitting at the kitchen table, I was listening hard. They were across from me, leaning slightly against each other. Zack's good hand was in Bibi's jacket pocket. Their story was oddly persuasive, told in those intense soft voices.

Zack and Tim and Alan changed the flat; they all drove to the divorced father's apartment, he was gone for the week, they couldn't find the photograph, they ate some English muffins out of his freezer, thought of calling me but got distracted, then it was too late to call, they got exhausted, lay down.

"Eight of you lay down?"

Well, yes, they said.

They slept awhile. Some people were smoking recreational amounts of dope in quiet darkness on the living-room rug; the others were in the father's room, on the bed and in the chair, under their jackets, sleeping. Later, the living-room people slept, and the bedroom people woke up. The apartment smelled like dusty smoke. Holly was gone. There was confusion. Much later it turned out she'd been outside, wearing her father's navy-blue overcoat, walking around the block—Spruce, Fifth, Pine, Fourth, over and over again. It was cold out, with a high, white moon. When Bibi and Zack got organized and went out to look for Holly, they stepped out into the dark street and there she was!

They reorganized themselves as a group, turned on some lamps, brushed their teeth with the absent father's toothbrush, opened, then closed, the windows, patted at the cushions. Alan was upset—maybe he was planning to make the wrong move. Holly was upset—this short night in her father's apartment, surrounded by his furniture, was in some strange, powerful way the most intimate time she'd ever had there. Some of the group wanted to debate with Alan; others talked quietly with Holly. After a long time standing in the foyer, they went out.

They found their cars. ("Why did you have to *find* your cars?" For a moment his wry self, Zack said, "Suffice it to say, we had to.") As usual, they drove to a diner. Holly was agitated and trembly and afraid people were looking at her; Alan was crying. Alan had been drinking a lot of tequila. While he cried, he held his velvet hat on his head.

Some were starving for pancakes. Others couldn't eat. It was late—they gave up the Washington trip and decided to turn back. When they came out of the diner and into the huge parking lot, Alan suddenly wanted to drive—he grabbed Bibi's keys and jumped behind the wheel of her car. They yelled, "Alan! You can't drive!" But he started off, slowly.

To stop him, Zack stepped in front of the car. Tim and Bibi stood to the rear, so he couldn't back up.

But Alan locked the doors and started calling increasingly loud warnings out the almost shut window into the freezing night. They were all jumping around when he finally eased into second and started toward Zack. Before Zack could jump away, Alan speeded up. When the car touched him, Zack did a strange thing: he put his hands against the hood and tried to push it back.

Alan had the windows up now; he was calling something, his friends were running alongside yelling, he accelerated; Zack was backing up fast, pushing at the car, and through the windshield he could see the tears on Alan's face. Zack jumped on the bumper and flung himself forward onto the hood. ("Like Harrison Ford," Bibi said fondly, and I blinked at her. I thought she was talking about an American President whose face I had temporarily forgotten.)

Triangle

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Zack was face down across the car, and he grabbed the wipers and the edge of the hood right under the windshield and held on with his fingertips. Two of the guys were reaching for him to help him off, but the car was going too fast and Zack was going to lose his grip and fall under the wheels. Alan speeded up. Zack laid his face on the metal—it reminded him of lying with your face against sand and hearing footsteps. He thought, This is ridiculous. I'm gonna get killed. He would be this year's high-school death—age seventeen, in front of a gleaming diner. He closed his eyes. The parking lot spun around him. He could hear Bibi's voice, feel the cold metal under his weirdly hot face. When, instead of turning out onto the highway, Alan rammed a wall sideways and the car stopped, Zack flew off almost slowly, he thought, and he could see behind his eyes the arc being described in the black air by his body—arms, legs, gelled hair—before, at last, he landed.

He passed out. Under his forearm was half a wine bottle. There was glass all around on the ground, like confetti, and Bibi knelt and brushed it away from him, making many little cuts in her hands, which only showed up later, after the others had pulled Alan out of the car and embraced him, and Zack had opened his eyes, and they were seated inside the diner again, ordering huge doughnuts and lots of cups of coffee, like long-distance truckers. They were all squeezed into one big booth, pressed against each other. They punched the buttons on the jukebox. They felt light and almost cheerful now. Zack laid his head back on the vinyl and tried to take Bibi's hand, and all the little cuts started to bleed. Then, Zack said, he and Bibi both began to cry.

It was morning. Outside, it was cold and sunny and still. I thought about their friend Alan, about his habit of holding the velvet hat on his head, as if against a stiff wind. We were still sitting at the table in our coats. "Look, I know this sounds crazy," Zack said. I was about to say it certainly does, how dangerous, how unwise, and also you passed out, you should be looked at by a doctor. Instead I said, "You seem so sad."

"*Not apple pie again!*"

• •

Zack said, "Well, we are sad. That's just it. We really are."

AFTER that, things changed. Nora didn't go to Florida; five days before, she broke up with Mark and unpacked. Zack got into college in Vermont; we drove to the mall and bought long underwear and Arctic boots. Then something seemed to drift out of the house, like fog breaking up, almost as if the kids were already gone.

Spring came. I took to spying on them. On Saturdays I'd walk past Tempting Treats and try to catch a glimpse of Zack in his green apron behind the counter. Or a couple of times on the way home from work I drove to the grade school where Nora ran the theatre program; I stood in the bushes outside the window and watched her apply makeup to the exalted faces of five first graders. She'd live at home one more year, a placid, celibate girl. In three months Zack would leave for college, never to return.

And then for the rest of the year nothing much happened—I expected it to, but it didn't—and we started living in a sort of timeless present. Things were as calm as they had been obscurely turbulent. At first this was unnerving, and we waited for more volatility. Finally, we settled down, but by then June had come and it all was essentially over. Zack graduated. The entire graduating class wore sunglasses with their caps and gowns; they threw their caps and bellowed; they patiently stood on the lawn for a long time being grinned at by their triumphant, exhausted, overexperienced families, then went out to get shitfaced.

I remember standing there on the grass watching Zack and Nora and their friends strolling away. At that moment, as I might have expected but hadn't, a wave of feeling broke over me; it was an unfamiliar combination—real, deep sadness and heart-stopping relief. I would miss them so much I'd never get over it—I couldn't live without them! At the same time, for my purposes they weren't leaving fast enough. I couldn't wait another minute to start not caring so much.

I looked around. Willie was standing with some other people, laughing like a maniac. Steven, with whom I would amicably part, had gone to get the still unblemished Porsche. For the moment, I was alone. I remember I was wearing a lot of jewelry and a beige silk dress. It was hot. But I shivered. I think I started thinking about a circus, imagining a life on the high wire—I shuddered, the way I bet you would if you had just crossed the wire for the first time, and now you were safe on the platform, folding your parasol, looking back, suddenly recognizing that you had recently been walking in air. —JANE SHAPIRO

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LETTER FROM EUROPE

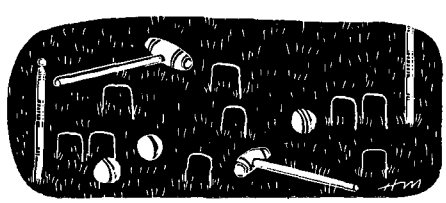
BERLIN

WOLF BIERMANN is a folksinger. When he was a young man, in East Berlin, he was called the Bob Dylan of the German Democratic Republic. He would come to the Alexanderplatz with his guitar and sing sad, intimate protest songs that were really poems—about being German and wanting simple, impossible things like truth and peace, and not knowing how to find them—and thousands of East Berliners would come to hear him. They thought that hearing Biermann sing in the Alexanderplatz was just like hearing Dylan sing in Berkeley during the Vietnam War—except, of course, that in their case the police came, too, and stopped the concerts, and sometimes arrested a couple of hundred kids and put them in jail for a few cold nights of self-criticism and reflection. Usually, they arrested Biermann, too. They did not know what to make of this *Liedermacher* who claimed to be a socialist, like them—a better socialist than they were—and then insisted that the past was *theirs*, the Wall was theirs (when everyone knew that Nazism and the Cold War were something West Germans had invented), and even that their socialism was corrupted and cruel, and not at all like the "true" socialism of poets and folksingers and ecological housewives and peace-movement Protestant pastors.

Biermann was too famous to lock up for very long—to send to Waldheim or Cottbus, where political prisoners disappeared until West Germany "bought" them out with hard currency and computer systems and limousines for the Politburo. Besides, Wolf Biermann made a convenient dissident, a symbol of East German tolerance, though the police preferred it when he sang for his friends, alone, in places that were less conspicuous than the center of the East German capital—in neighborhoods like Prenzlauer Berg, where a lot of the houses were still gutted from the war and nobody went except the kids who wanted to write or paint or start a rock band, and who were beginning to arrive from all over East Germany and squat in the abandoned houses until the government found them, and they became "tenants," and had to pay.

The police gave up on Biermann in the end. He asked permission to sing in West Germany—the West German Metal Workers Union had invited him to give some concerts—and they let him go, and somewhere between Cologne and Bochum he heard on a car radio that his East German citizenship had been "cancelled," and he could not come home. He ended up back in Hamburg, where he was born, singing sad songs and writing sad poems about the corruptions of exile, and wondering why, for a *Liedermacher*, there seemed to be so few friendly, "socialist" alternatives to fighting devotedly for socialism in East Germany or fighting devotedly against it.

That was in November of 1976. By the time the Wall came down, in November of 1989, Wolf Biermann was as much of a stranger in East Germany as he claimed to be in West Germany. The young Prenzlauer Berg poets were writing Dada—which some of them believed was a French post-structuralist invention. The young *Liedermacher* were into punk rock and heavy metal. In Prenzlauer Berg, Wolf Biermann seemed as folkloric as his songs—an aging Hamburg hippie with a droopy mustache and a guitar-strap slouch who in moments of national nostalgia occasionally broke the charts, and was, in fact, suspected in the East of being a millionaire. The new *spiritus rector* of the Prenzlauer Berg scene was a poet named Alexander Anderson. He was not a very good poet, but as much as anyone else he was responsible for what in East Germany passed for bohemia. The French have a word for Anderson: he was *débrouillard*, which means he was foxy and knew his way around and was able to work the system in his own interests. He was famous in his small world as an organizer and entrepreneur. He had introduced the writers he knew to the rock groups he knew, and the rock groups to the painters, and he was famous for the parties he threw at his girlfriend's place—parties where the painters hung their pictures and the writers read their poems and the rock groups played their songs, and everybody had a good time, and said that protest was indeed alive and well in East Germany. He had put together little homemade books of their drawings and verse, and seen to it that the books were passed around Prenzlauer Berg. He had promoted the Prenzlauer Berg scene long before there was a scene—which meant that West Berliners looking for samizdat in East Berlin came to Prenzlauer Berg, and carried out the books and the paintings they saw there, and made the "West contacts" with galleries and publishers that brought in money and word processors and tubes of paint and, most important, the West Berlin attention that was an East Berlin artist's best protection. He was a constant and mysterious source of equipment and news and tapes and books by people no one in Prenzlauer Berg had ever heard of.



Anderson was sent West in 1986, but by the time he left he had got the poets in Prenzlauer Berg out of their squats and reciting Schwitters' sound poems and having debates about Jacques Derrida and Jean-François Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard, and convinced they were an avant-garde—not only post-structuralist but post-deconstructionist and post-materialist and postmodern and post-political and whatever other "post"s Anderson claimed were happening across the Wall. Being the children of police-state schools, they were often unburdened by poetics or aesthetics or craft. The Prenzlauer Berg style was to go home after one of Sascha Anderson's evenings and write a couple of hundred poems by morning and call it Dada, or City Lights, or simply cool. Sascha was cool. He cultivated a three-day beard, like Yasir Arafat and the men in American underwear ads, and wore an overcoat to his toes and little round granny glasses, and he kept his blond hair short and spiky. He never talked about the repression in East Germany. He seemed to be saying that the ultimate politics was no politics, and the ultimate protest was detachment, and possibly that the ultimate art was pu-

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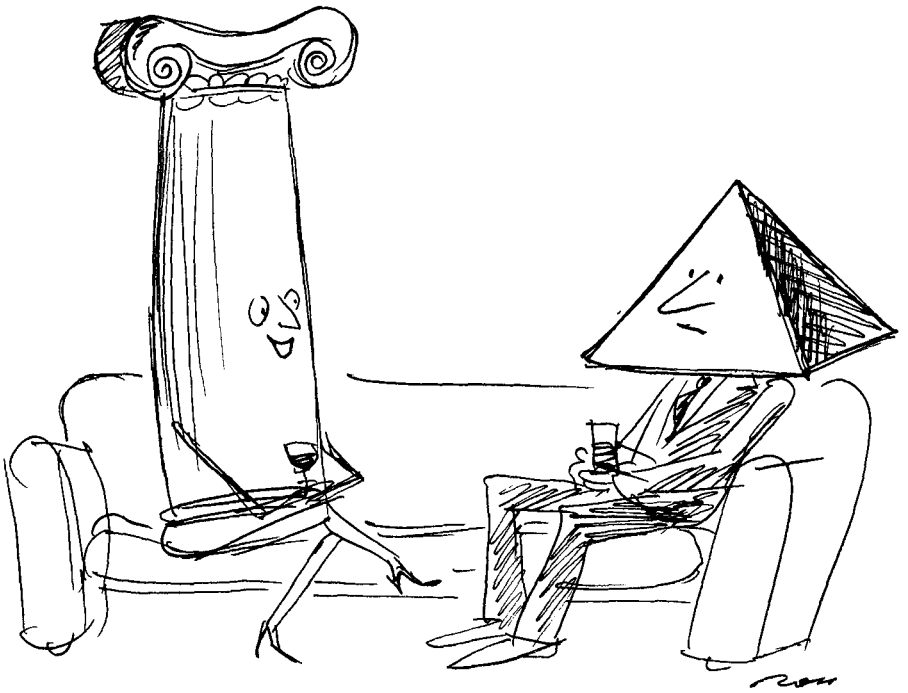
erile or incomprehensible, or both, but no one really knew, because he never talked about what he thought. He never talked about himself at all. No one knew anything about Sascha Anderson. No one knew why the secret police—the Staatssicherheitsdienst, or Stasi—hadn't come for him earlier, though people assumed it was the Stasi who finally expelled him. His friends at home were happy to have Sascha Anderson in West Berlin, working to promote them. He was a one-man East-West cultural impresario, creating little sensations of celebrity and exchange—nothing, they said, like Wolf Biermann, who sat in Hamburg getting rich on sadness and sentiment. It was said that there was bad feeling between Biermann and Anderson, and that it was a matter of literature, because Biermann was an old-fashioned writer—a sixties sort of writer—and wrote what he felt in a thick, direct, embarrassing sort of way, while Anderson and his friends were allusive and modern and wrote things nobody could decipher. Or it was said that it was a matter of attitude, because Biermann had lost his cool and protested, while Anderson had waited and "done his thing" and let politics happen. Or that it was a matter of politics, because Biermann, whose father was a Jew, objected to German "pacifism" during the Gulf War—he said that being against war was like being *for* motherhood, and he didn't know what it meant, really—while Anderson, of course, never said anything about war. But in the end it turned out to be a matter of reputation.

Last spring, Biermann won the Georg Büchner Prize, which is the country's important literary prize and is given yearly to "writers and poets who write in German . . . and have had an important influence in shaping contemporary German culture." He accepted it formally in October, at a ceremony at the Rathaus in Darmstadt, where Büchner was born, and gave an angry speech about the "dark times" in Germany, and about what a real socialist like Büchner would have made of the socialists of the German Democratic Republic, who had kept their power because a hundred thousand Stasi kept everyone else spying on friends, and people were so compliant that they never produced a workers' movement like Solidarity or a rights movement like Charter 77. He said there was not much courage in the G.D.R. There were a few courageous people—he named some of them—but in the end even the "opposition" turned out to be full of Stasi spies and informers, and he named some of *them*. The last informer on his list was Sascha Anderson. He did not say, "Sascha Anderson." He said, "The untalented bullshitter Sascha-Asshole, a Stasi spy, who is still playing the son of the Muse hoping that his files will never appear"—because everybody knew who Sascha was, everybody called him Sascha. Sascha had seen to his reputation. He was *débrouillard*. He was a paid informer. He was thirty-eight, and he had been spying on his friends, in East Germany and then in West Germany, since he was seventeen.



"We've come a long way, baby!"

• •

THERE are people in Germany who believe that the Prenzlauer Berg scene was a Stasi invention, and that it was all about the German language—about controlling the political possibilities and "subversive" uses of German by taking a generation of would-be Biermanns and getting them out of the house to meetings and readings and underground presses, where they could be watched and encouraged to betray themselves, and then diverting them from politics and protest with obscure texts and sophisticated aesthetic models they had neither the education nor the experience nor, often, the wit to understand. Those people say to remember that Biermann's German—crude, concrete, and relatively "harmless" in West Germany—was considered wildly subversive in East Germany, whereas the "cloudy, metaphoric stuff" that Anderson was promoting was considered harmless in East Germany but was certainly sensational and subversive by West German standards. Of course, it is impossible to know if the Prenzlauer Berg style was a cynically programmed style, or a mirror image of the obfuscations of official agitprop, or a commentary on it, or a flight from it, or simply posturing adolescent verse. An old Prenzlauer Berg novelist named Adolf Endler replied to the Büchner speech by accusing Biermann of talking "Wehrmacht Deutsch" (the implication, according to Biermann, was that anyone who talked straight and told the truth was a Fascist and should be put in Army boots, along, perhaps, with Luther, Brecht, and Büchner), and, indeed, a German journalist I know says that after the speech she heard people at fashionable Hamburg dinner parties describing Biermann as "our best writer after Martin Luther." It may be that Germans today see

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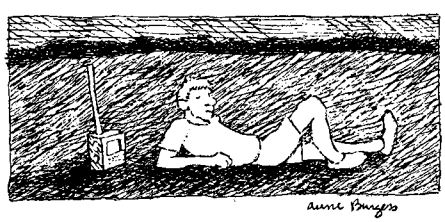
"German" as carrying such moral imperatives because Germans have abused the language so often in the past, and in the interest of causes far more chilling than free verse. The Swiss novelist Jürg Laederach, who spends a lot of his time in Germany, once said that what makes Germany so merciless—viewed from across the Rhine in German-speaking Basel—is that Germans can use "acts of language" to exterminate.

Günter Grass, who was at Darmstadt with Biermann, accused Biermann of using "Stasi language" in his speech, and called him "Wolf Grand Inquisitor." Ulrich Greiner, the cultural editor of *Die Zeit*, accused him of putting the attack before the evidence, because he talked about "assholes," and another journalist said he was using the language of a "sixties radical in Earth shoes." Freimut Duve, the book publisher and Social Democratic deputy, said in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* that he didn't have manners and should certainly return his Büchner money, which amounted to thirty-six thousand dollars. And Laederach himself said that making political attacks on your poetry competition, so to speak, was "against the principles of political discourse." What they were saying was that Germans using "acts of language" to attack other Germans made everybody nervous.

Of course, the real attack was Anderson's. He may have written lines like "for i am your/sister your lap & the two/facelike mask without profile all/seizing a pot full of chaos full of holes/of the single-sciences" in Prenzlauer Berg, but the lines he wrote to his control, a couple of miles away at the Stasi complex, on Normannenstrasse, were factual, plainspoken, direct, and damaging. The friends he betrayed—the ones who have started reading through Anderson's reports on *them*—say that they still admire at least his discipline, that as an informer Sascha was scrupulous. Sascha's reports were never cloudy, like his poems, or speculative or exaggerated or emotional, like the reports of a lot of other Prenzlauer Berg informers. They were models of accuracy, and even objectivity—the sort of work that gets passed around to first-year students in journalism schools. Maybe he should have been a journalist, because what gets written about Anderson in the newspaper now is rarely the "facts" about Anderson but an exploration of what the proper German feelings about Anderson should be. It is about what makes "good Germans" and what makes "bad Germans" and about whether good Germans turn into bad Germans if they accept an Anderson or tolerate or excuse an Anderson, or if they expose or reject or punish an Anderson.

The German government has an academy in Rome called Villa Massimo, and before the Büchner speech Anderson was invited to stay there for a couple of months. After the speech, some of the writers at the villa complained, and eventually—reluctantly—Anderson agreed to stay home. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported it this way: "The Berlin poet Sascha Anderson, who is suspected of being a Stasi spy, has voluntarily renounced a grant at the Villa Massimo in Rome." Biermann thought it should have been reported *this* way: "Protests by all the grant holders at the Villa Massimo have forced the dabbler Alexander Anderson, who was unmasked as a long-term spy, to abandon his plans to go to Rome at the expense of the German taxpayer." Anderson might have put it a third way, if he were reporting to Normannenstrasse. He might have written, "The Villa Massimo withdrew an invitation to the Berlin poet Sascha Anderson, who was accused in October of informing for the Stasi, after the accusations were confirmed in January"—because that is what in fact happened.



THERE was never a revolution in East Germany. People talk about "the revolution," and a painter by the name of Bärbel Bohley, who was active in the East German peace movement, is sometimes referred to as the "mother of the revolution," but the Wall came down in East Germany because East Germany was literally coming apart—and it had very little to do with the Prenzlauer Berg poets, or with the thousands of political prisoners, or even with the crowds that marched in Leipzig and Dresden and Berlin chanting, "We are the people!" East Germany fell because the state

THE SEASON

I love so to be in your body
taken up like spring
after a push-push winter fall
through ice.

Wild red sumac in jars, set loose
on a sill since then,
can heal the skin of my backward or
lazy chase,

as I heal your white winter thighs.
I lie in place.
A hundred apologies if somebody's running
step jars me upright.

If my hard black water or snowslide
in corners gets
gathered, hand over handful,
to wash your face.

I do love to be in your body as if it were
spring, when out
of its famous fever what's chilled to the bone
can slide away.

—Elizabeth Macklin

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was bankrupt, industry was bankrupt, agriculture was bankrupt, and there was no money, and thus there was no way short of a massacre to stop East Germans from leaving. There was no way because East Germany had got to be too expensive and too embarrassing for Mikhail Gorbachev's new *perestroika* East, and Gorbachev was happy to give it up—which he did in exchange for twenty-one billion dollars from Helmut Kohl, who wanted East Germany for himself.

Wolf Biermann said, in Darmstadt, that for him "We are the people!" had less to do with the demonstrators of 1989 than with the angry mob in "Danton's Death"—Büchner's 1835 play about the Terror in France. The reference was instructive, because in Germany *Das Volk* have usually been invoked when lawlessness becomes "the law"—which is pretty much what happened in the east of Germany during the sixty years most East Germans have been alive. The revolution in East Germany was not the peaceful revolution of the Czechs, or the monetary revolution of the Hungarians, or the labor revolution of the Poles. In some ways, it was just Germans following orders to be free. Hansjörg Geiger, a West German jurist on the commission charged with providing four million East Germans and two million West Germans with access to the reports filed on them by informers like Sascha Anderson, says that sometimes he wishes the G.D.R. had lasted one more year, and the economy had *totally* collapsed, so that East Germans would be disabused of this myth of a revolution. Most East Germans *were* compliant, if not collaborative—which not to say that they were happy or satisfied with their lives. They organized, in the end, to be able to leave East Germany, not to reform or remake it.

"O.K. Now give us that outsider's look."

• •

No one knows how many East Germans actually did inform for the Stasi—which was huge without them, proportionately many times bigger than the Gestapo. A lot of informers had more than one code name, and so far only about three thousand of the Stasi's victims have been able to see their files and match those code names to the man or woman who came over, say, on the night of February 12, 1979, for a game of checkers and a beer. The estimates now are up to three hundred thousand informers—which means that at any one moment over the last forty years as many as one East German in every fifty may have been informing on the rest. They produced eighty-eight million pages of microfilm, and the files themselves are so enormous that the people at Geiger's commission—Germans call it the Stasi Commission—describe them in miles: fifty miles of files in East Berlin; seventy-five miles in the Stasi's fifteen district headquarters. There are more than thirty-six thousand pages of files on Biermann alone (and a lot of stories about what's in them, like the story about the two Stasi who spent their time monitoring a bug in Biermann's Hamburg apartment, and complained in their reports that he was always listening to "Goldstein Variations"). Geiger says that the literary informers may have been considered less reliable than, say, the hospital informers or the factory informers—more imaginative, perhaps, more given to exaggeration—because so many of them seem to have been reporting on the same people. There are apparently six hundred names in the files on the novelist Christa Wolf, which means that virtually everyone Mrs. Wolf knew either was watched by informers or was an informer himself.

Sascha Anderson got his code names when he was starting out, in Dresden, and they were not very exciting. David Menzer was the first name, and then there was Fritz Müller and eventually Peters—and, as far as anyone knows, those were the names he kept. The most interesting thing about Anderson's arrangements with the Stasi in Dresden is that he and his controls—a major named Heimann and a colonel named Reuter—left their messages glued under the slot of a condom machine in the bathroom of a local café that Anderson and his friends on the Dresden arts scene frequented. Anderson may have been making a point about collaboration by choosing ordinary German names like Müller and Peters, but some of the names that informers chose, or their controls chose for them, were inspired. Leitz watched everybody. Pegasus flew, because he was watching

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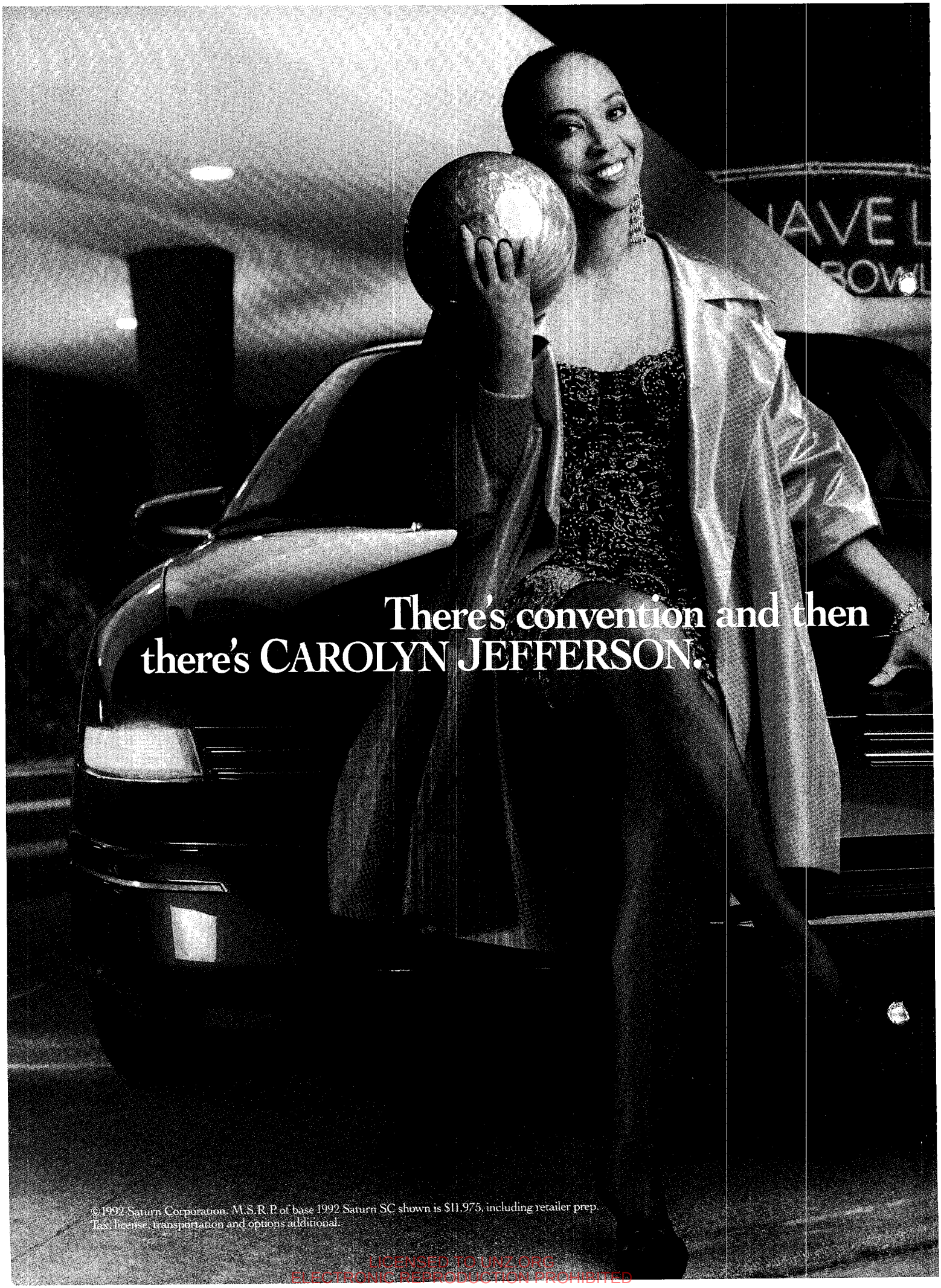

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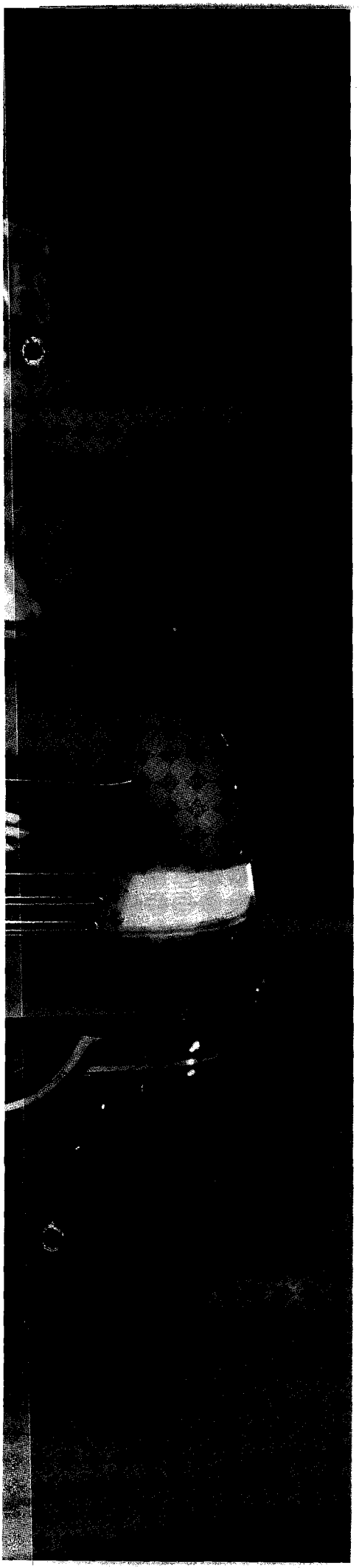

What do we mean? Well, how many people do you know who spend their Monday nights bowling with friends in formal evening wear? Not too many, we'd wager. But then, Carolyn's an original.

Yet, when we asked her why she bought her Saturn SC, she reeled off some pretty mainstream responses. Like how well her car handles the mountain roads at Lake Tahoe. How easy it is to take care of. How she's gotten used to the driver's seat lumbar support she didn't even know she needed.

For the most part, it all seemed to be reasonable enough. But according to Carolyn, the real reason she bought her coupe was for its front-end styling. She loves it. And as if the front end wasn't enough, she loves the way the rear end looks, too.

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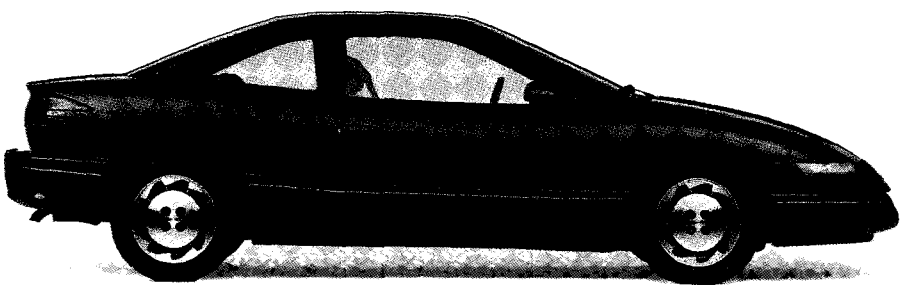

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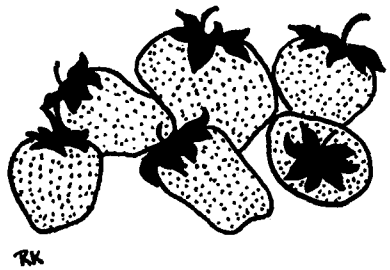
people in the peace movement, and they travelled to meetings. Matisse watched painters. Hölderlin, of course, watched Prenzlauer Berg poets—which gives a measure of credibility to the theory that the Stasi knew exactly what they were doing when they chose the books that informers like Anderson circulated.

Some people think that the Stasi knew exactly what they were doing up to the moment the Wall fell—that not only Prenzlauer Berg but the revolution itself was, if not a Stasi plot, then, in a manner of speaking, a Stasi coproduction, because the Stasi saw better than anyone else the changes coming, and wanted to play a profitable part in those changes. A writer named Henryk Broder is generally credited with the "Stasi revolution theory." Broder is a Polish Jew who works in Germany, and it is his thesis that in 1986, when the Stasi produced a white paper setting the protocol for the end of a Communist G.D.R., they helped set the "revolution" in motion. "They jumped on the train and became the conductors" is the way he puts it. They became "progressive." They put their informers in place in the revolution, if not to avert it, then to control it, or coopt it, or maybe just to launder themselves (like mafiosi with new names and new faces) into respectable and influential new German citizens. Three years later, they were heading the election lists, and running the companies in line for management buyouts, and even—or obviously—leading the burgher committees that "protected" the famous files at Stasi headquarters until the two Germanys voted to unite. Broder's field is not the Stasi. (Lately, it has been the history of the Jewish Cultural Federation in Germany between 1933 and 1941.) But he was caught up in the excitement of German unification, and then bothered by what he calls the "theology" of the discussions about unification. He discovered that many Germans had a Biblical notion of history, and thought of the division of Germany as "a kind of divine punishment for Auschwitz"—Günter Grass, for one, kept saying there could be no "Germany" after Auschwitz—and Broder doesn't believe in either divine punishment or collective guilt. He thought if you were German, and started using the Holocaust as a measuring rod, you would have to divide Germany into an infinite number of "Germanys," and Germans would start thinking of themselves as victims again, and blaming Jews again—which was in fact what was happening in some of those discussions. So he started thinking about the Stasi, who made everyone a victim, and discovered that a good number of the victims were Stasi.

Of course, with three hundred thousand informers, the Stasi was not so much a mirror of East Germany; to a large extent, it *was* East Germany. It employed or involved so many East Germans that it is reasonable to assume that those Germans were various and disputatious, and that many of them were looking forward to democracy or to capitalism, or even to the possibility of not being Stasi. The Stasi were everywhere, and, for all practical purposes, they were everybody. Every church had Stasi, and so did every farm, factory, hospital, school, and housing project, and every political party with honorary access to the Communist parliament. You knew who the Stasi agents and officers were, and very often you knew, or suspected, who the informers were, and you accepted them—or, more accurately, made a marriage of convenience and followed the rules of that sort of marriage, and got used to having them around, and even felt that the problem of marriage was settled. I have met the "house Stasi" at pig coöperatives and chemical factories and pretty brick Lutheran churches, and last month I had a pleasant dinner with a philosopher from Humboldt University who had been informing on his department chairman. He confessed after the Wall came down, and was fired, and then he was reinstated when it turned out that nearly everybody else at Humboldt had been spying, too. Now he was looking forward to a semester teaching in America, where he had heard there were still Marxist philosophers like him to talk to.

No one in Germany knows, really, what to do with so many informers. A lot of informers insist that they did no harm. They argue that, with everybody spying on everybody else, there was really no such thing as privileged information, or even very secret information, in East Germany; that, from the point of view of security or intimidation, a Stasi with "all the information" was no more useful to the state than a Stasi with no information—that "all the information" amounted to a kind of disinformation. The argument against them is, obviously, that, for all their meaninglessly logged and cataloged facts and speculations and psychological profiles on the shelves on Normannenstrasse, there was the reality of the deportations and the damaged lives and the mysteriously failed careers and, of course, the political prisons where people were brutalized and tortured, and where many people died. Everyone knew the reality, and certainly the informers knew, whatever they say now about never hurting anybody or never doing anything "bad," or about "protecting" their friends by informing against them instead of leaving them to the surveillance of strangers. Obviously, not every Stasi liked the reality. The opposition was filled with Stasi who said they were going to build a Germany *without* Stasi. But whether or not they believed their lies, as people who lie professionally often do, the fact is that they were active in the revolution, and it is not surprising that some people concluded that they planned it.



RALF KERBACH is a thirty-six-year-old Berlin painter. He came West from Dresden, by way of East Berlin, in 1982, and now he lives in a Wedding loft, and his shows sell at the Eva Poll Gallery, in Tiergarten. He is what Germans call a "West person," by which they mean that he is easy and confident and open to the world. In Berlin, it is easy to tell a West person like Kerbach. He wears crewneck sweaters and faded T-shirts with his black jeans. His motorcycle jacket is authentic. It is a thick, worn, comfortable brown leather jacket—nothing like the slick black jackets with pleats and studs and too many zippers that East people trying to look like West people wear. He keeps his brown hair cut, and he shaves in the morning, and has a chipmunk smile and a high, narrow nose that seems to be sniffing something and makes him look like a young, dark Bobby Kennedy. East

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painters, with their serious shaggy mustaches, tend to look like Lech Walesa. People admire Kerbach. They admire his painting and his charm and his nice, fresh, friendly face. When he eats at Florian, which is down the street from Savignyplatz and one of the places to go in West Berlin, the women at the next table smile at him. The waiters ask him to draw on the tablecloth. And he often does, because he is an accommodating sort of person, quite unspoiled by the fact that he is famous. He says he always felt like a stranger in East Germany, but he likes the West, and the people around him and the art around him, and the fact that when he hangs a show nobody from the police comes to take it down.

The worst thing that happened to Kerbach since he came West was the news about Sascha Anderson. Anderson was one of his oldest friends. They go back to Dresden—Kerbach was in the tenth grade and running in a track meet, and Anderson turned up, running next to him. "It was very crazy," Kerbach used to say when he talked about meeting Anderson. "Sascha knew me, and I didn't know him, and so it began." Now he shakes his head and laughs and says, "It began *and* ended that way," because in January this year the anchorman from "Brennpunkt" came to his loft with a camera crew, and asked to film him, and presented him with papers proving that Sascha Anderson had been spying on him, in East Germany and probably in West Germany, for nearly twenty years.

Kerbach has not been called to see his files, although he applied in January to see them, just after several million Germans saw *him*, on television, disbelieving and confused and staring at the anchorman's papers, telling no one in particular that he couldn't absorb such terrible information. It takes time for someone like Kerbach—someone "undamaged"—to see his files. They have to be processed, which means that somebody at the Stasi Commission has to go through them first and black out the damaging things in them about *other* people, the medical records they supplied or the fact that a friend's wife was sleeping with his next-door neighbor. Then, there is the question of priority. The people who get to see their files first are people who have been in prison because of the Stasi, or have lost their homes because of the Stasi, or have

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been deported and lost their East German citizenship, or have suffered in their education or their careers, or are over seventy-five and have less time than other people to wait in line. And then there is the question of logistics, because the files have to be transferred from the "archives" at Normannenstrasse to "reading rooms" in the old Interior Ministry, on Glinkastrasse, where members of the Stasi Commission work, and the rule is that no more than thirty people can share a reading room.

Kerbach is not in a hurry, but he knows now that other people besides Anderson informed on him, and he wonders which of his friends used the code name Max Beckmann, because he assumes that Beckmann was another painter, and he says it's "awful" to think of painters informing on each other. He's interested in his files, but his files are not his life or his *Lebensinhalt*—his "life's contents"—the way they seem to be for Biermann, who comes to Berlin all the time to look at his thirty-six thousand pages. Kerbach thinks that maybe this is because the work of painters is painting, whereas the work of East German writers is necessarily the exploration and explication of what went wrong in the G.D.R. He says that the argument between East and West, left and right, Dada and Dylan has been recast as an argument between the people who want to forget the Stasi and the people who want to remember, and that he puts himself somewhere in the middle—"somewhere free"—like the actress Katharina Thalbach, from the Schiller Theatre, who applied for her files, discovered that they ran to twelve thousand pages, and told the Stasi Commission to throw them out, because she had no intention of spending the second half of her life reading about the first half.

At the beginning, Kerbach was "paralyzed" by the news about Anderson. He would think about Sascha Anderson, and say to himself that "as a man, as a friend, I can't imagine doing this to anybody." He tried to paint, and couldn't. He tried to go out and get on with his life, and couldn't. He was looking around for something to do, something clean, when it occurred to him that his loft was in terrible condition. The roof and the walls needed insulating. He had had the loft for seven noisy years, and had managed, but he decided that he could not stay in a noisy loft thinking about Sascha Anderson, so he started fixing it. It took him a month, working every day and most evenings, and somehow while he was working "it all cleared up—the whole thing went up in smoke." He says that now he can look at Sascha Anderson "from the outside." It is what he means by being free.

Kerbach thinks that maybe the difference between him and Sascha Anderson is a matter of family. East Germans talk a lot about family when they are describing informers—describing the kind of people who informed, and the kind of people who were supposed to be "above" informing. Anderson came from a good family—a *gutes Haus*—but it was not nearly as good as the Kerbach family, in the class hierarchy of the classless G.D.R. Anderson's mother had an architect's degree and worked at making animated cartoons, and Anderson's father was a dramaturge at the opera, but they were apparatchiks, really—culture bureaucrats—and fought about everything but the Communist Party, and did not much care that Sascha Anderson stopped studying and took up typesetting, or that he married in his teens and lived with his wife and babies in one room with a sink down the hall, or that he went to prison for forging checks. The children of bureaucrats married young in East Germany, like workers' children, and divorced young, and the girls got money from the state and raised their babies alone.

Kerbach says that Anderson's was the "normal" East German background—that Anderson learned from his parents that "if you do something for the system, then the system does something for you." Kerbach's own parents were good German burghers, the kind of parents you saw in Cologne and Düsseldorf but rarely in Dresden, and what he learned from them was that the system was terrible. His father owned a metals factory and had a hundred and fifty people working for him, and when Ralf was a boy and started talking about becoming a painter his father behaved like any West parent and wanted to know what was wrong with staying home and taking over the business. He died when Ralf was ten, but the factory stayed in the family until the East German "economic reforms" of 1972, when the state seized it, and it made them "different." It meant that the Kerbachs had capital, and were not Communists—that they did not identify with the system any more than the system identified with them. Ralf was always in trouble with his teachers. They thought he was contradictory, and one of them thought it would be better for Ralf if the school where he was studying art dropped him—which is what happened. "I liked that one," Kerbach says. "He was straight—not problematic, like my 'friend' Sascha—and maybe he was even trying to help me, because there was no way a painter could be educated in Dresden then. You never saw an original. You got your art—your Matisse, your Picasso, your Expressionists—from books, from reproductions. And East Germany was like a filter. What you got—in philosophy, or literature, or painting—was not necessarily what was good. It was what came through. Rock came through. I never knew why, but now I know it was a Stasi business. Anything new I got from Sascha Anderson. He would come over and throw things on the table. Biermann's songs. The French structuralists. The books from Wagenbach. When I got the catalogue from the Müller Gallery, in Cologne, that introduced the Neue Wilde painters, Sascha saw it at my house and said, 'Hey, Ralf, they're doing what *we're* doing!' "

Kerbach got his first studio at seventeen. He discovered a village near Dresden where an old lady had a family winery, and rented a huge room in the winery for a hundred and twenty marks a month, and started drawing. He liked the countryside, and so did his friends, who started coming out from Dresden to visit and eventually put together a show of new Dresden painters in an old barn. One of the painters, Helge Leiberg, invited Sascha Anderson to read his poetry at the show. Having poetry at art shows was something East Germans did, Kerbach says, but usually those shows were private, and took place in artists' houses, and only people you knew were "safe" were invited. They were less about painting than about getting people together and "doing something *against*"—doing something forbidden—whereas Kerbach and Leiberg and the other young Dresden painters wanted *their* show to be a big public spectacle. They

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hung posters and mailed invitations, and then, one weekend in May, when the weather was wonderful and people were driving out with their families, they called everybody over and said, "Come on, there's a happening in the barn." Nearly everybody they called did come, and some of them stayed and listened to Sascha Anderson read poems. The police came afterward, and shut the exhibit down.

"Looking back, I think it was all planned, everything that happened," Kerbach says now. "Because when the old lady with the winery died I had to move, and suddenly I was offered a small storefront space in Neustadt, which was the center of the Dresden scene, and it turned out that Sascha Anderson was living across the street. He came to my place and just started talking. He showed me his rejection slips. He told me, 'Ach, we're in the fight together.' He introduced me to poets like him—Bert Papenfuss-Gorek and Stefan Döring—who came through Dresden and were having the same experience. They couldn't get published, couldn't get their writing to the public, whereas all *I* had to do with a painting was frame it. I wanted to help. I knew that if we worked together on a book—if we did it by hand and there were only eighteen or twenty copies—we could publish. So in 1980 I made some drawings for the poems Sascha called 'Jeder Satellit Hat Einen Killer Satelliten'"—"Every Satellite Has a Killer Satellite." "We made the book ourselves, and it was wonderful. I felt like Blake making woodcuts."

Kerbach considered Anderson "a very modern person"—meaning that Anderson had no strong or debilitating convictions. ("A spy without conviction is the first socialist businessman" is how Iris Radisch, at *Die Zeit*, described him.) Anderson hustled all the time. He and Kerbach put out four books of their poems and drawings over the next eight years, and Anderson saw to it that they got around and always got West, to a publisher called Rotbuch, and made a reputation for them both. He was a kind of agent for Kerbach. Kerbach never asked Anderson how he did it, or if he took a cut, or if he had to give the Stasi a cut. He never suspected anything, though he says he should have suspected—not because their books were successful but because Anderson was so guarded about everything except being successful.

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Anderson never talked about himself to Kerbach. He never "burdened" Kerbach with his problems; he never even "shared" his problems. He never talked about *Innerlichkeit* or about deep German feelings or deep German angst or about any of the other things that Germans talk about to friends. Kerbach counted Anderson as his best friend, and he had everything he could ask of a friend and collaborator except real conversation, which he was scared to demand, because Anderson had made it clear that confidences were "not cool." Kerbach remembers one day when the two of them were working together in his apartment, and he happened to go to the window and see the whole sky darkening for a storm. He called Anderson. He said, "Look at this. Look what's happening. Look at the incredible sky." And Anderson looked at the sky and said, "The sky doesn't move me at all." Anderson was twenty-three then, and Kerbach was impressed. "I couldn't imagine that at twenty-three this much cool was possible," Kerbach says.

Kerbach applied to emigrate in 1980, when he was asked to contribute to an exhibit of drawings in Hamburg, and the government refused to let him go. He was often in Prenzlauer Berg after that, staying with Sascha Anderson and his girlfriend—a potter by the name of Wilfriede Maass, who had left her husband for Anderson and lived in a studio on Schönfliesserstrasse that was big enough for Anderson's friends and Anderson's famous evenings. Anderson didn't think much of Kerbach's plan—it was considered "not cool" to want the West, Kerbach says—but he never tried to persuade him to stay. In a way, he brought the West to Kerbach, in Prenzlauer Berg, because people visiting West Berlin who were interested in art or literature or rock or theatre heard, sooner or later, about the studio across the Wall where poets were "discovering subjectivity" and "dismantling language" and "alienating language from itself," and even "purging language from the text," and those people got visas and bought their obligatory twenty-five ostmarks at the checkpoints and spent an evening at Wilfriede and Sascha's and saw the nice work that Kerbach was doing. A lot of Americans came—by the time the Wall fell, Wilfriede's guest book included Grace Paley, Donald Barthelme, William Gaddis, and Walter Abish—but Kerbach thinks the best moment must have been when Allen Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky appeared, at Sascha's invitation, and they painted a phallus on one of Wilfriede's vases. Ander-

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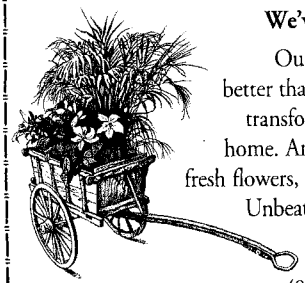

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son has the vase, along with a fine collection of bowls and pitchers and pots that other "friends of Prenzlauer Berg" painted. It was his idea that every artist who wanted to exhibit at the studio on Schönfliesserstrasse reciprocate by painting Wilfriede's pottery, and he kept the best pottery for himself.

Kerbach spent the next few years waiting for permission to go. He worked on his books with Anderson, and painted two or three teacups and a whimsical teapot—he puts it somewhere between de Kooning and de Stael—but he never thought of staying. As soon as his exit visa came, Anderson threw him a good-bye party—"more of a wake," Kerbach says—and he crossed at Friedrichstrasse with a suitcase of drawing paper and black ink and the telephone number of someone Anderson knew who worked at Rotbuch and had promised him a bed. "I wasn't a celebrity then," he says. "That was it, that was all I had." He didn't see Anderson again for four years. He started painting in a subsidized loft at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, in Kreuzberg, and got to know what he calls the "out-of-the-establishment people," and eventually the establishment people got to know *him*, and he ended up as one of the five "new" German artists in a landmark exhibit called "Malstrom," along with his old Dresden friends Cornelia Schleime and Helge Leiberg, who had managed to get to West Berlin, too. He made new friends. He moved to Wedding. People started collecting Kerbachs. Those years were very good for him, he says. "I had to test myself in the world, in the market, but I didn't promote myself as a dissident. It was a big business—being a dissident, saying what people in the West wanted to hear. It was a way to get attention, and sometimes the only way to get accepted. But it was not *my* way. I don't think I changed in the West. If anybody changed, it was Sascha. He came West, and we became— There is a word for it in German, *Bekannte*, which means 'acquaintances.' We became a little 'less than friends.' Sascha was under a strange pressure in the West, always thinking about business, and not acting free anymore—maybe because here everybody else *was* free. There were quarrels between us. He would come to my studio and say, 'You paint too heavy, you have to change your colors, you have to change your style.' " It turned out to be mainly East Germany that had bound them. After a while, they stopped working together. In 1988, they published their last book.

The year Sasha Anderson came West, Kerbach made a series of paintings and drawings about their friendship. He doesn't know what inspired them, since it was long before he knew that their friendship was over, and certainly before he knew that Anderson had betrayed him. He thinks that maybe it was a reaction to seeing Anderson again, from a "West perspective." One of the paintings is called "The Friendship Takes a Bath," and it involves a play on the word *baden*, because in the painting Kerbach and Anderson go bathing—*gehen baden*—away from each other in the Wansee. One of the drawings is called "Sascha," and in it Sascha Anderson has what looks like a clubfoot, and he is running with a briefcase, and ugly, shadowy black birds are pecking at his head and his feet and tearing his jacket apart. Not many people know the painting, but the drawing is famous. *Die Zeit* printed it on January 24th this year—when Iris Radisch came back from the Stasi Commission and filed the story that Biermann's accusations against Anderson were true. Kerbach says that art critics come to him now and ask, "Did you know what you were doing in 1986? The foot, the birds, the briefcase—did they mean something to you then?" And he doesn't know what to tell them. All he knows is that the "Sascha Anderson" most Germans will remember is a picture by a less than friend who might never have got started without him.

"I heard the first rumors about Sascha in October," Kerbach said one night this spring, after he had spent a day working on his loft and was having a schnitzel at Florian. "I had been in France, and when I got home a sculptor I know said, 'Kerbach, watch out! There's going to be a Stasi bomb exploding in your life.' Well, I went back to my studio and thought and thought. I asked myself, Who could it be, in *my* life? I had my guesses, but I wasn't sure, so I asked Sascha who *he* thought the Stasi was, and Sascha said, 'It was me.' This was before the Büchner speech, and it never occurred to me then that it really was Sascha. I thought that when Sascha said 'me' he meant it was just rumors about him

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that Biermann was spreading. Biermann's a very tactical person, and his tactic has always been to keep the process going—the process of clarifying what happened to artists in the G.D.R. But then I read his speech, and there was also the arrogance of his judging everybody, of his calling Sascha an asshole. I thought, This is not part of the discussion. This almighty, omnipotent attitude of Biermann's is his Stalinist background showing, and he shouldn't forget how it marked him. Not everyone who lived through the shit in East Germany had the chance to move to Hamburg, the way he did, and who has he really helped, with all his talk about victims and oppressors? The people who gave the orders are free, and the informers like Sascha are sacrificed. I don't know—Sascha lied to me. I read one writer's files, and those reports of Sascha's—they went from simple description to deeply private things. I begged Sascha to talk about them, but he refused. The East German furtiveness was still there.

"Sascha had a chance to say no to the Stasi. They all did. A guy I know was approached in Dresden years ago. He was asked about my work, my private life, and he said no. He said, 'I won't tell you anything, and if I do talk I'll repeat it all to Ralf anyway.' Someone who calls himself a writer has a duty to tell the truth about what happened to him and what he did. That's the minimum—that a writer stand up and tell the truth. I would have liked it if Sascha had stood up and said, 'That's what I did,' and then gone back to his life. I tried to convince him, from the very first day. I wanted him to say, 'Ralf, I told people about your private life.' Not 'I didn't do it.' So I let them film me. I thought that if I did, maybe people would understand what was happening a little better. It's not easy to break a friendship that's as old as my friendship with Sascha, but when Sascha didn't understand, it nally was a break. I saw him several times after that, but now he's stopped coming. I guess I was waiting for him to show up at my house and say something before it was too late—before I read my files. I don't think he will come anymore."

THE distress in Germany right now is about something called *Hausfriedensbruch*—an assault, in the deepest, most intimate sense, on home. It is no longer about Erich Mielke, who ran the Stasi and was arguably the second most powerful man in East Germany, or even about Erich Honecker, who was the most powerful, and is safe in Moscow, demanding his "right" to a tranquil old age. East Germans are angry about Honecker and his friends, and probably most East Germans would be happy if those men died, but they do not frighten East Germans anymore—not the way the idea of being surrounded by informers still frightens them. Jürg Laederach, the Swiss novelist, says that the oddest thing about the G.D.R. is that "once it was over everyone looked like harmless old men, and it was hard to keep the idea, or even the language, of terror alive once the terror was gone." Wolf Biermann sounds crazed lately when he tries to describe a Stasi general like Wolfgang Schwanitz, who in fact beggars description. Schwanitz went on television and said that East Germans never knew that anything was wrong in their lives, or suffered at all, until they read their files and decided to be "victims," and afterward Biermann wrote about kicking in his television screen and dragging Schwanitz through the broken glass into his living room to beat him. But Biermann can be heartbreaking when he writes about people he knew, and especially about writers he knew, like Sascha Anderson. It may be simply that wounds inflicted by friends are the most intolerable wounds. I have heard Biermann described as "a man with his skin peeled off by experience."

At the beginning, it was mainly East Germans who wanted the files opened. It was West Germans who talked about forgiveness, or reconciliation, or tolerance, and pointed out that no one could ever say for sure what he would have done in any East German informer's place. East Germans wanted to know whether it was a friend or a neighbor or a relative or a colleague who had informed the Stasi that they were enemies of socialism, and who that friend was, and what, specifically, he accused them of—or what the Stasi said he accused them of—and if he got what he wanted, or ever even knew what he wanted. They wanted to learn why the black Passat was parked outside their house for a year, or why they were put on trial and sent to prison for ten years as subversives, or ended up exiled in Hamburg, like Wolf Biermann. They assumed that in the process they would come to understand a little more about their own lives. They never anticipated the number of informers. They never thought of how they were going to get along afterward in an "opposition" neighborhood like Prenzlauer Berg—of what the reactions would be, or whether the fragile community they had would disappear when they knew the worst about each other, and how casual most of the betrayals had been. Most East Germans wanted the fate of the Stasi files left to East Germany. They thought that only East Germans could know what those files had meant, and how hurtful or damaging they would be. They said that victims and informers had to come to terms with each other alone, and decide for themselves whether to burn the files or lock them away in vaults, or even ignore them, the way the Poles had ignored the crimes of their secret police. They were frightened for themselves, because so many people who had been betrayed wanted vengeance.

West Germans had always believed that the Stasi operation was a "triumph of statism"—the end product of some demented bureaucratic German impulse—but when they opened the doors on Normannenstrasse there was more dementia than bureaucracy in what they found. The most important files were gone—lost in a deal between the Stasi and the "revolutionaries," by which the Stasi got to destroy their personnel files in exchange for opening the files with the master codes for everything else. And the most spectacular files were already circulating. Those files began to surface in the spring of 1990, during the first free East German elections, when a Rostock civil-rights lawyer named Wolfgang Schnur, who was leading a new party called Democratic Awakening, was accused of informing. Schnur dropped out of the elections and disappeared into a hospital, and after that it was clear that the trade in Stasi files was political big business. It was a seller's market, and in those days mainly a Stasi seller's market, because a lot of Stasi had fled the occupation of their headquarters with whatever they could carry—usually the files involving *them* or the files on dissident politicians, which could be

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sold or used as blackmail. Their information was a kind of hard currency, buying Deutsche marks and protection. Bonn wanted it, and usually got it at the source—from the East German Interior Minister. The press paid for it, and spent hundreds of thousands of marks on files that were being offered up by everyone from outraged burghers to old Stasi looking out for their retirement to the "information brokers" who are a curious fixture of the West German news business and run a kind of legal black market in other people's secrets. The conservative press, which expected the left to win, bought files on left-wing candidates. The liberal press, which expected the right to win, bought files on right-wing candidates. *Der Spiegel*, which had the money, bought files on everybody. Rudolf Augstein, who publishes *Der Spiegel*, supposedly paid a hundred thousand marks for the Stasi payroll—a list of the names of ninety-six thousand Stasi agents and officers. That list went on the black market a couple of days before Augstein could print it, and for less than a third the price that Augstein paid. People were amused, but not many of them said anything about the ethics of trafficking in information in the first place, and the only person who seemed to do anything about it was a painter in Erfurt named Matthias Büchner, who disappeared with the Erfurt files, occasionally sending word that he was keeping them safe until the Stasi's victims were free to read them first. Now *he* is accused of being Stasi.

A lot of people wanted the Stasi files. By October 3, 1990, when the files were officially "transferred" from East Germany to "Germany" and the Stasi Commission locked them up and hired fifteen hundred guards to protect them, many of those people had simply walked into their local Stasi office, found friends among the "occupiers," and walked out with the files they wanted. The West Germans concluded that this was something that never would have happened in "Germany." When they told the East Germans that the correct and lawful thing to have done was wait for a law to pass, so that *everyone* could walk in, the East Germans said that the West Germans were talking like policemen.

A lot of opposition politicians followed Wolfgang Schnur into obscurity. Ibrahim Böhme, the leader of the East German Social Democrats, was exposed as an informer, and quickly left politics. Lothar de Maizière, the leader of the East German Christian Democrats—and the Prime Minister of East Germany from April of 1990 until unification, in October—was exposed, and left politics, too. Once the files were opened, in January this year, the leaks became "legal." By then, some of them involved people at the heart of the "revolution"—people from Neues Forum, the citizens' movement that for practical purposes had run East Germany for the first four months after the Wall fell. Some of them involved the few Communists everybody trusted. Gerhard Riege, who was a Communist deputy in the Bundestag, hanged himself in February after someone accused him of informing. His suicide note—he said, "I fear public opinion . . . shaped by the media and against which I cannot defend myself"—was read into the record by his Party leader, Gregor Gysi, who had just been accused of informing himself. Wolfgang Berghofer, the last Communist mayor of Dresden, worked with the Stasi. Two of the five new presidents of the East German *Länder* were Stasi. The only East German *Land* president left in office today is a Lutheran lawyer named Manfred Stolpe, who is the president of Brandenburg. Stolpe used to be the liaison between the Lutheran Church and the Communist state. He talked to the Stasi all the time, and sometimes, he says, he "saved" a dissident from the East Germans by suggesting that he be sent away to West Germany. Now he is accused of informing under the code name Secretary. He says, "I would have met with the Devil if he would have helped us." He is still much loved among old East German dissidents. He was like Sascha Anderson—the last person anyone suspected. He did not fit any of the stereotypes Germans had about informers, or seem to have anything to do with Sartre's famous definition of collaboration as "*hégélianisme mal compris*." Sartre thought that informers were either marginal without the courage to dissent or idealistic without the courage to believe or individualistic without the courage to be free, but he did say that what all informers had in common was the illusion that they were "realists." Stolpe was a realist. Anderson may have thought he was a realist, too.

Wilfriede Maass still has the studio on Schönfliesserstrasse. It is a big, rambling place, with two potter's wheels, and a couple of kilns, and drying and display rooms, and closets stacked with pots that some of the artists she knows have painted. It is hidden at the back of the courtyard of an old Prenzlauer Berg building, and it used to be that the only way to find it the first time you visited was by the poster beside the door. The poster was a blown-up, upside-down photograph of a naked man in a bathtub. Wilfriede is forty-one, and she is what most Germans would call an East person. She is mild and artisanal, and unadorned except for a silver earring hanging from her right ear, and she is determinedly "natural." One of her friends—a Prenzlauer Berg writer—told me that Wilfriede is like an "organic tomato" that does not fit into the crate with the sleek, accommodating commercial tomatoes and has to be taken on its own terms.

Wilfriede sits at her potter's wheel in old jeans and mountain boots and a clay-stained denim work shirt, and keeps warm in the wintertime with homemade leg warmers and the heat from two electric stoves. She wears her brown hair short and straight, parted on the side and combed back behind her ears, and she never wears makeup. There are deep furrows between her eyes, and her eyebrows are fierce. They make her look like she is concentrating hard, or even scowling, but the fact is she is a gentle—even a placid—person, who never expected anything except a "quiet marginal life" in the German Democratic Republic, a life without much money or ambition, and certainly without the pressures of that mysterious, stressful West phenomenon called "the market." She built her life the way she built her studio, arranging and rearranging and accommodating herself to the things that happened. When Sascha Anderson moved in, and she divorced her husband, Ekkehard, she moved into an apartment across the hall and kept the family—they had a son and a daugh-

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ter—together. When she needed room to display her pots, she appropriated the apartment next door, and tore out the toilet and sometimes sprinkled the floor with sand and rocks, like a Japanese garden. When the Wall fell and she became a "business," she turned her bedroom into a display room and moved into a couple of vacant rooms down the hall. Her rent was two hundred and forty marks a month in November of 1989, and her living was guaranteed, because she was an official "private handcraft industry" of the city of East Berlin. Now the rent is over fourteen hundred marks, and she depends on a yearly stipend from the Berliner Senat—which decided that Wilfriede Maass was "culturally important" to the new Berlin, and made the gallery a *Werkstatt*—and on selling the pottery her painters decorate when they have a show at the studio, and taking a percentage for herself.

Wilfriede never expected the Wall to fall, although she always dreamed of travelling, and even applied to leave for a month in 1987, when an uncle in West Germany turned seventy-five, and was disappointed when the state said no. She never expected Sascha Anderson to betray her, either, although she was not surprised when she learned he had, because, even after five years of living together in Prenzlauer Berg, "we really knew nothing about each other." Ralf Kerbach, who stayed with Ekkehard Maass on Schönfliesserstrasse while he was insulating his loft, says that Wilfriede was a victim of Sascha Anderson's system *and* East Germany's system. He thinks that the "different experiences" that have made him a West person and Wilfriede an East person are as much of a wall between them as the real Wall ever was—that as far as "mentality" goes the Wall is very high in Germany, and will still be high in ten or twenty years.

Wilfriede's studio was famous. It was kitcheny and comfortable. It had lumpy old velvet couches and platters of cookies and pot warmers and stray cats and homely spider plants and a nice clutter of cups and books and toys and extra sweaters, and plenty of heat—and it is not so different now, except that now there is a show of Mikael Eriksson oils where Wilfriede used to keep the washing machine and hang the sheets. The painters and poets who came to Wilfriede's from their squats thought of it as the underground, and Anderson sometimes called it "a salon in the French tradition," but it was really just the comforts of an eccentric home that pleased them. They would sit at the big round table that Wilfriede always referred to as her "living room" and watch Wilfriede and her friends placidly glazing pots, and feel taken care of by busy, agreeable, obliging women. There were always women around, working, at Wilfriede's studio. Wilfriede's friend Petra Schramm, who is one of her partners now, was typing the manuscript of "Kassandra" for Christa Wolf the year Sascha Anderson moved in, and Petra says that until she finished typing, and "Kassandra" came out, the closest the Prenzlauer Berg women got to feminism was a contraband copy of Marilyn French's novel "The Women's Room" that someone had smuggled in from West Germany.

Ekkehard Maass was a *Liedermacher*, like Wolf Biermann. The men were very good friends. Biermann had taught Ekkehard how to sing and how to play a guitar, and Wilfriede says he worshipped Biermann. He was always disappearing with Biermann. They would go off with their guitars to think up songs about the true socialism, and she would be left at home with the babies, and it was not much different, she says, from being left at home when Sascha Anderson got one of his mysterious telegrams signed "David" and disappeared with his Stasi control. Wilfriede is not a sophisticated person. She comes from a village called Ahrenshoop, on the Baltic coast, and stopped school after the tenth grade and started apprenticing. She wanted to leave the countryside, and maybe even go to college, but when she came to Berlin she met Ekkehard and got pregnant right away, and that, she says, ended her education. Ekkehard was a student. He studied theology and then philosophy and then Russian, and by all accounts he is still studying something. Once, he was expelled from Humboldt for protesting in the Biermann affair. People have said that when Anderson arrived at the studio on Schönfliesserstrasse it marked a succession from the Prenzlauer Berg folksingers to the Prenzlauer Berg avant-garde.

Officially, Sascha Anderson worked

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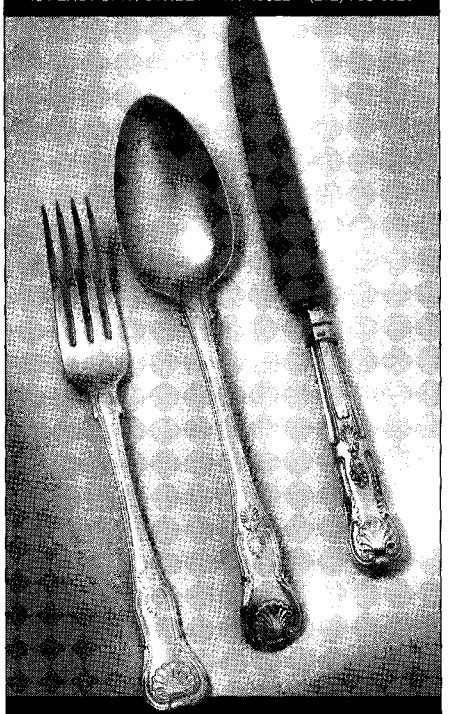

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for Wilfriede. She always had three or four people working at the studio—the limit for a "private handcraft industry" was ten—and when Anderson arrived she took him on. It wasn't for the work but to give Anderson a paper status, because the capital was closed to people without what the state considered respectable, productive, Communist callings. They were de-facto dissidents. (The word the Communists used was "asocial.") They could be picked up and sent home or put in jail or, sometimes, given a choice between the Stasi and home or jail. The official explanation was that people who lived their lives outside the productive purview of the state were stealing from the state. Officially, they were criminals, but in Prenzlauer Berg they were only "a little marginal," like everyone else who came, and they depended on friends like Wilfriede, who was marginal herself but, officially speaking, harmless. Anderson had no interest in making pots. He was "more of a patriarch than a potter," Wilfriede says. He settled in and made his calls—Wilfriede had a telephone, which was rare for Prenzlauer Berg—and organized his evenings, and people in the scene were delighted, because at last someone was running things, someone was giving orders and telling them what to do. Wilfriede says now that the system had made them passive.

In January, Wilfriede applied for her Stasi files. She doesn't know what to expect when she gets them, but she still sees Anderson. She says, like Kerbach, that it's hard to break a friendship that is as old as their friendship, and as close, and has survived a long love affair and three years on opposite sides of the Berlin Wall. "About Sascha—you have to revise your opinion with every conversation" is the way she puts it. Sometimes she laughs and says, "Do I feel betrayed? Angry? No. I find it relatively fascinating. It makes him interesting." She keeps a stubborn, skeptical sense of humor when it comes to Anderson. And she is tolerant—more like a mother than a lover he left for the good life in West Berlin and an apartment in Schöneberg, near the Café M, and a girlfriend with better West connections. He was like the system—you didn't expect much and you certainly didn't expect confidence, and Wilfriede says it is pointless anyway to spend your time thinking about one informer when the market is at your door and your rent is fourteen hundred marks and strangers arrive from Cologne and look covetously at your two front rooms, which they tell you used to belong to a butcher in their family. Wilfriede's life was better when Anderson was there. The people she knows, the contacts she made, the fun she had "in this shitty G.D.R." she owes to Anderson. She says that she always thought there was something wrong, but she was "concentrating on other women"—which, apparently, he was, too.

"Biermann says now that Prenzlauer Berg was a vegetable garden of the Stasi, but I suspected nothing," Wilfriede says. "There were rumors in Dresden about Sascha being Stasi, but people laughed. There were always rumors about this guy or that guy working for the Stasi. You treated those people warily, you tried to keep your eyes open, but for every rumor there was another rumor to contradict it, and the rumors were systemic anyway, and usually it was the Stasi who produced them. My husband was once thrown out of a meeting because people thought that *he* was Stasi, but the real Stasi were sent to prison for a couple of days to throw suspicion off them. I never suspected Sascha. I never read the telegrams he got here, because they were not addressed to me. Sometimes he showed one to me. It was always something like 'Come to rehearsal,' and it was always signed 'David.' Sascha was always organizing music, so there was nothing odd about the telegrams. The only thing that made me suspicious was the signature. I didn't know anyone named David. But I never asked him. Sascha had a very intense life, and I had two children to raise, I had my work, my life, and there was not much time to ask about *his* life. I think for Sascha I was like a receptionist, or maybe an executive secretary. There were always calls, messages coming in. My mother's house was like that. *She* was like that. East Germany was like that. You could say I did it for the underground in Prenzlauer Berg."

This winter, Wilfriede got a letter from the company that manages her building. It is the company that always managed the building, and the people are the same, but the name is different. The company used to have a typical East German name—a set of initials standing for something bureaucratic and severe. Now it is called Wohnen im Prenzlauer Berg—Living in Prenzlauer Berg. The problem was that one of the neighbors was spying on Wilfriede. "A *real* East German," Wilfriede says. "A man who hates gays, artists, foreigners, everything abnormal—and especially me." He had already spied on the Russian homosexual in the apartment next to his, and on the Jewish family upstairs, and after he looked in Wilfriede's window and saw the sand and the rocks on the floor of her spare room he was able to report to the people at Living in Prenzlauer Berg that Frau Maass was not using the room for "living," and the company wanted it back. Wilfriede says that the only difference between the company today and the company seven years ago, when she rented the room and broke through to her studio, is that today the company has to make the building pay. She blames the fact that a West German has claimed it. It has not occurred to her yet that, with Sascha Anderson organizing an underground there, her spare room was under Stasi protection, though sometimes she wonders if the woman who gave her permission to take the room—it is a big square room, with plenty of sun and height—was Stasi, because whenever Wilfriede calls the company, the company says that she is "out of town."

Living in Prenzlauer Berg invented a word for Wilfriede. Her problem was *Zweckentfremdungsverbotsverordnung*—which means that she was not "correct" when she tore out the toilet and built display racks instead of buying a bed and a chest of drawers. Two housing inspectors arrived one day when Wilfriede and I were having tea and cookies, and they were clearly not West people, because they sat down and one of them said, "I will stay and listen to your very interesting talk." Wilfriede has applied for status as a nonprofit workshop. She has two partners besides Petra, and they think that being officially "nonprofit" might help them keep the studio together. Wilfriede has already let her assistants go. There is no money to pay them now, and it makes her nostalgic for "the old days," when everybody worked together at the studio, and nobody needed money,

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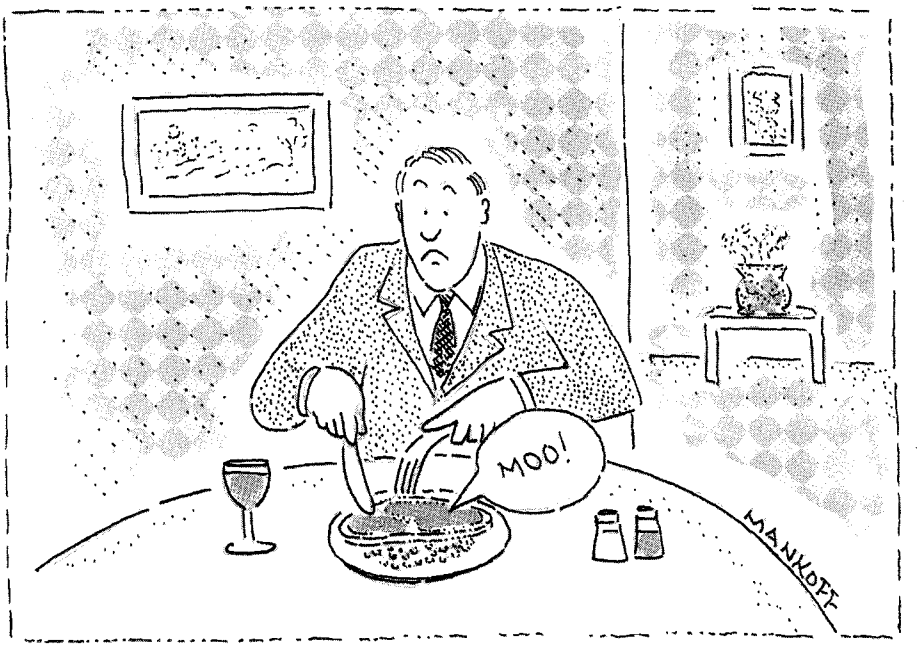
and life was "quieter." "My life is totally different now," she says. "Prenzlauer Berg is different. People still come when there's an opening—people from here, people from the West who are easy about the past. Coming back depends on how you deal with the past—those who can't deal with it stay away. We have music for them, food, something to drink. But we don't meet privately that much anymore. There are cafés and bars now, and you know exactly where everybody in Prenzlauer Berg is, you know where to find them. The kids go to clubs, but it's different for them. For me—for forty years I lived with the East system, and I was shaped by the system, so I'm lonelier in my daily life. Everybody seems lonelier."

In the old Prenzlauer Berg days, Wilfriede Maass and Sascha Anderson were known for their goodbye parties. Their friends were always leaving for the West, and whenever a friend got permission to go—it was usually after the Stasi came and took his G.D.R. passport and replaced it with a one-way exit visa—they opened the studio and had a party. Kerbach left with his party, and then some other painters left. At the beginning of 1984, a group of dissidents walked into the American Embassy in East Berlin, demanding asylum, and after that a lot of people were able to leave quietly. Women sometimes got out by marrying West men. One of Wilfriede's friends—a painter named Christine Schlegel, who was good at teacups—married a Dutchman, and Wilfriede and Sascha gave her a wedding that lasted three days. It was easy to leave if you found an American to marry, Wilfriede says, because the farther from East Germany you were going to live the easier it was to get permission.

In 1984, Wilfriede and Anderson began to talk about leaving together. Nothing came of it. Wilfriede didn't want to leave her mother, in Ahrensloop, or her son, next door—she had custody of her daughter, but her son was with Ekkehard—or, she says, the freedom to live off her pots without worrying about having to sell them. By the time Anderson did go, in 1986, so many people on the scene were leaving Prenzlauer Berg that no one noticed that his permission came quickly, or that he was actually able to put off leaving for a few weeks to "clear things up." Troublesome poets like



THE BIRTH OF A VEGETARIAN

Sascha Anderson were usually given twenty-four hours to pack their bags and disappear. He and Wilfriede met for a year on trips to Budapest and Prague. After that, he had his West girlfriend, and it was two years before Wilfriede saw him again.

They met at Cornelia Schleime's studio, in West Berlin, a few nights after the Wall fell. "In all that chaos, Sascha had got on the phone and organized a poetry reading for the old group, and of course I went," Wilfriede says. "There was such an old connection between us." Anderson wanted to be friends. He presented Wilfriede with her first West car—an old Mercedes—and from time to time they met at readings or parties or got together for a cup of coffee. He always came back to the studio for exhibits. He came one night right after the Frankfurt Book Fair, which is where the rumors about him started, and told Wilfriede that none of the rumors were true, and Wilfriede says she believed him. She believed him after the Büchner speech, and after Biermann confronted him on a television show that everyone in Germany saw. The next time he came to Prenzlauer Berg, he took Wilfriede for a drink at the Kiryl (which is *lyrik* spelled backward, and stands for lyric poetry). They sat under a ceiling papered with blown-up pictures and poems from "Every Satellite Has a Killer Satellite," and Anderson had a lot to drink and kept repeating that everything in his life was wrong—that everything *he* had done was wrong. Wilfriede says that he got so drunk he couldn't walk, and she had to put him in his car and drive him home.

Anderson still came back to Prenzlauer Berg. In January, the old group met in Wilfriede's kitchen, and he assured them he had never informed, and then, according to *Die Zeit*, everybody got sentimental about "community" and the good old "dark times" in East Germany. Wilfriede asked him once more about his meetings with "David"—the mysterious meetings he had when they were still lovers—but she says she didn't have the courage to say "You're lying" when he kept denying everything. The last time he came to the studio—it was a couple of months ago, for a Holger Stark opening—she didn't mention the Stasi at all. No one did. The feeling at Wilfriede's was that people who blamed Sascha Anderson were either West people, who were lucky enough to have been born in the right country and didn't understand anything, or East people like Cornelia Schleime, who had spent a year in New York and got to be a West person, and had pinned up poems on her studio wall "wishing Anderson dead."

"I basically knew the truth," Wilfriede says. "Maybe I always knew. But I couldn't get it out of him, and I thought, Well, give him another six months and then he'll say some-

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thing. Now I think the time to talk is really past. I think of his double life—organizing exhibits and readings and then sitting down and writing reports—and I think either he's extremely schizophrenic or else he's cool, calculating, and extremely smart. A top agent. Someone you could advertise in the United States. He was always a better organizer than a poet. He wrote like he was—very guarded, with some fantastic lines in between."

East Germans sometimes complain about "paying for the Third Reich," and in a way they did pay. They ended up on the wrong side of the Allied line while the West Germans got "rehabilitated" and then rewarded, and prospered. The fact that some East Germans accepted the Communist regime—and even believed that it was keeping them "safe" from Fascists—does not alter the fact that those East Germans believed the moral victory was theirs. They believed that they were sacrificing, while West Germany was not—that "history" was against them. It has to be said that their crimes were minor next to the crime of the Holocaust—that Germany is not going to exorcise the Third Reich with the spectacle of East Germans' exorcising Stasi. Yet the spectacle is inevitably about Nazism. It raises questions that should have been raised in 1945, and were put off, and forgotten for a generation, and often for more than a generation. How was this possible? And how German is it?

Michael Naumann, who runs the publishing house Rowohlt and was a writer himself, likes to say that the Stasi were a "sociological miracle," but he thinks it is too easy to say they were a "typically German sociological miracle," even if this is what a lot of Germans believe. He prefers to say that the real precedent for the Stasi was the Saint-Simon cult where everybody's clothes buttoned in the back, and people always needed someone to dress them, and could never be alone. What interests him is "how people adapt to circumstances of such extreme humiliation." Naumann publishes Biermann, and he is fierce on the subject of East Germany. He was born in the East himself, in 1941, and twelve years later had to leave, with his family, for "class reasons." Three million people left between 1949, when East Germany became a state, and 1961, when the Wall was built to keep them home, and Naumann says that the people who stayed "lost their history." East Germany, trying to teach them *what* they were—trying to produce workers for a workers' state—neglected to teach them anything about *who* they were, or who they had been, and some of them came to believe that they were Hitler's "victims." They were "uncivilized in the deepest sense, because they had suffered a disappearance of everyday memory." Memory is at the heart of what Naumann calls his "West German resentment" of East Germans. He says it comes from the experience of having learned about "Germany"—an experience many West Germans of his generation fought their parents to have—and a determination to break the silence about what Germany had been during the twelve Nazi years, and what Germans had done, and how enthusiastic they had been about Hitler. He thinks it separates his West German generation profoundly from East Germans of the same age, because those East Germans were raised on a rhetoric of anti-Fascism that never implicated them, as Germans, at all. East Germans never knew why they were still goose-stepping past a leader, or even why they had to continue to live with so many policemen. The ones who "remembered" Germany were usually the East Germans who left and became West Germans, like Biermann.

Wolfgang Kohlhaase, who is a sixty-one-year-old East Berlin writer with no connection to the Prenzlauer Berg poets, has a theory that every country produces its own "cultural intelligence"—which does not mean "culture" but does mean that a sixty-one-year-old German socialist like him knows something about how and why East Germany was created, and why it vanished. He says that the writers of his generation who left, like Biermann, and the writers who stayed, as he did, often had the same reasons for their different choices: they wanted to heal their country and make "socialism" possible. He thinks that the real quarrel between writers like Biermann and the writers in East Germany now has to do with which of them are the authentic revolutionaries. He says that maybe, as the century ends, the questions for Germany are "Where are we now? And are we back where we started?" He does not think those questions are about Prenzlauer Berg, where the attentions of the West "encouraged the dilettante to crowd out the genius."

There are people in West Germany who made their careers as critics of Prenzlauer Berg literature, although the fall of the Wall produced its own literary remorse, and the West Germans who promoted Prenzlauer Berg are engaged in a kind of revisionism, and some of them now say that the West has only itself to blame for so many inflated reputations. The few East German writers of spectacular talent—writers like Christa Wolf and Heiner Müller, who won their Büchner Prizes long before Biermann—helped the Prenzlauer Berg poets, and gave them money and went to the readings Sascha Anderson arranged, but they did not depend on Prenzlauer Berg. They depended on Erich Honecker, who let them publish, and travel, and make the reputations that saved them. They were an élite in East Germany. "Well, I admit, I never thought 'the people' were right" is how the writer Stefan Hermlin explained it. Müller himself has said that he never considered "not travelling because no one else could travel." He is a cynical man, and the fact that the greatest privilege in the G.D.R. was the freedom to leave it does not seem to have disturbed him. He used to tell his friends in West Germany that he lived in "the other dictatorship." He told the filmmaker Marcel Ophuls that he may even have needed the pressure of dictatorship, "because I know how to deal with dictatorship, and democracy bores me."

Bert Papenfuss-Gorek, who is the best of the Prenzlauer Berg poets—the one who will certainly survive Prenzlauer Berg and have a "German" reputation—says that whenever any of the Prenzlauer Berg poets was in trouble Christa Wolf or Heiner Müller would "pick up the phone and call Honecker," and it did not occur to them to ask what Christa Wolf and Heiner Müller were doing, calling up Honecker. Wolf was a socialist and a believer, and she even applied a couple of times for a seat on the Politburo, and

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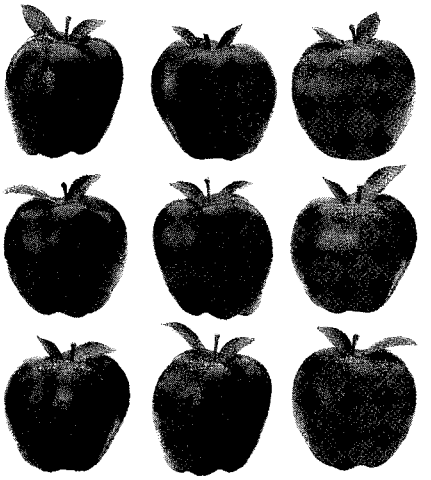
was disappointed when she was rejected. She wanted East Germany to stay East Germany. After the Wall fell, she begged East Germans not to leave. She tried to persuade people to resist West Germany, to demonstrate for a "purer" G.D.R., but very few people came to her demonstration, and after that she withdrew and said she was suffering too much because of "history" to take part in discussions about Sascha Anderson or Wolf Biermann, who had always defended her when she was called an apologist for the regime. Her contribution to the debate about the Stasi, and the awkward presence of Stasi in East German literary life, was a novel, "Was Bleibt?"—"What's Left?"—about a day in the life of a writer who discovers that she is under surveillance. She said she had written the novel in 1979 and put it away in a drawer, because too much talent had already been wasted in prison, and a writer's duty was not to heroics but to work that endured. She talked about Galileo, but she did not talk about Cervantes or Dostoyevski, or even Havel. After the Wall fell, she mourned the death of socialism and published "Was Bleibt?" and accepted an invitation to spend a year in Santa Monica, at the Getty Center.

It may be that the "credentials" of writers like Christa Wolf and Heiner Müller—and maybe their courage—depended on their passports, and even that the part they played as East Germany's most celebrated literary dissidents gave them what I have heard described as "the extra aesthetic gratification that made life interesting." Hansjörg Geiger, at the Stasi Commission, calls it—a little harshly—"the gross self-deception of people with advantages in the system thinking they were negotiating 'preventatively' with the system, when in fact they were participating in the system." West Berliners who saw their plays and read their books remarked that they were full of bite and criticism and pain, and even panic. In East Berlin, the bite and certainly the criticism were cut from the text—if it was criticism of home. Müller and Wolf were a kind of model, in that they took a long view, and cycled their work through the West, and made themselves "indispensable" as East German geniuses. The kids writing Dada in Prenzlauer Berg tried to emulate them. One poet told me about his friends' waiting five years to get an anthology published. "The Stasi said no, and then it was published in the West, and *then* the Stasi said O.K., so we finally did it!" By then, nine of the poets in the anthology were living in exile.

The etiquette in Prenzlauer Berg was that you did not complain, and, especially, you did not complain to the media in West Germany—not even after the Wall came down. You were not craven. And you did not play hero. The poet Jan Faktor—who is married to Christa Wolf's daughter—wrote an angry article last year about East German literary dissidents and said, "To play the great warrior was no problem. . . . For that reason, people of refinement have refrained from it." That was before the Büchner speech, but he was talking about Biermann. "Refinement" was what a socialist gentleman depended on in adversity. Wolfgang Kohlhaase says it was a way of telling the West, "If you think I'm going to stand up and say I'm sorry for my life—forget it!" He was a dissident himself, but he thinks that human nature puts most people somewhere in between "dissidence and shameless opportunism"—that maybe human nature is what defeated Sascha Anderson when he started informing. In Communist East Germany, it took what he calls "a spectacularly egocentric talent like Wolf Biermann's" to be able to write lines like "Those who once stood up courageously before machine guns are afraid of my guitar/Panic spreads when I open my mouth," and believe them, and make them come true.

No one knows why people like Sascha Anderson informed—weakness, pressure, pathology, adventurism, blackmail, or a very German game of "identity," or admiration for the system, or even contempt for the system. No one knows why the Stasi were so successful with those people—whether the Stasi were good policemen or good psychologists or simply good Marxists, spreading the "surplus value" of French thought through Prenzlauer Berg. Michael Naumann suspects that they had read their Marx, or knew, at least, that the highly sophisticated theories of a Derrida or a Barthes were really luxury goods—"the Gucci loafers of Western intellectual life"—and had nothing to



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do with the kinds of critical discourse which encourage revolution. But no one really knows, any more than anyone knows whether exposing the Stasi now is going to help Germans think seriously about their past or help them ignore the fact that they are not thinking about their past. No one knows who the first "victims" were, or even what the word "victim" means in a country where Stefan Hermlin, who is a Jew, can say that Wolf Biermann's denouncing Sascha Anderson was "only comparable to the denunciation of Jews during Nazism."

The West Berlin novelist Peter Schneider says that listening to writers argue this year he came to agree with Ralf Kerbach that "the Wall between intellectuals has never been so high, or worked so well, or made everyone so crazy." He had never believed that writers in the East and writers in the West were "connected," and it interests him now that most of the writers he knew and admired in East Germany eventually ended up in West Germany, not because of privilege but because the Stasi decided they had to go. He knew Anderson, too. He says that Anderson was "somehow too cool," and that he took it for shyness, and even felt a little sorry for Anderson, because once Anderson was in the West, and hustling for himself, no one seemed to want him. He was like his poetry: he didn't seem remarkable once he was competing for attention. Now he is hiding, and in some Prenzlauer Berg circles he is thought to be more of a "victim" than his victims. It comes back to the question of "victims." Ralf Kerbach thinks that being a "victim" is even victimizing Biermann. He says that Biermann is suffering from what Germans call the Kohlhaas syndrome, meaning that Biermann is behaving like Heinrich von Kleist's horse trader, Michael Kohlhaas, who lost his horses to a wicked Junker, and got obsessed with the crime, and proceeded to ruin his life in the pursuit of "justice."

RAINER SCHEDLINSKI was one of the Prenzlauer Berg informers. He is also a Prenzlauer Berg poet and a Prenzlauer Berg critic and a partner in Galrev, a Prenzlauer Berg poetry press that he and Sascha Anderson and some of their friends started, but it is probably accurate to say that being a Prenzlauer Berg informer is what has made him famous in Germany. Schedlinski is thirty-five, and arrived on the scene in Prenzlauer Berg two or three years after Anderson. He had a troubled past, and never courted the attention Anderson did, although he put out an important underground journal called *ariadnefabrik* and was admired in radical poetry circles in the West for his *explications de texte*. When the people at *Sulfur*—"a literary biannual of the whole art," in Ypsilanti, Michigan—wanted to talk about the Prenzlauer Berg poets, it was Rainer Schedlinski they quoted. It was Schedlinski who described how Bert Papenfuss-Gorek dismantled language into "mnemonic unities which, mutually purged from the text, then permit a new arrangement," and how Stefan Döring produced "digitalized, dialectical chain reactions . . . by which one word destroys the one next to it." When people read Schedlinski, they understood why Wolf Biermann was boring—not because Biermann wrote boring poems, which was often true, but because Biermann *believed* in socialism, whereas the new Prenzlauer Berg poets were into "subjectivity" and didn't believe in anything.

Schedlinski didn't seem to believe in much himself. He wrote poetry about "domes of nothingness" and "inner barrenness" and "heavy coffins of emptiness." He says now that he believed so much in the Prenzlauer Berg writers that he took money from the Stasi to be able to publish them in his journal—that he was really helping the people he spied on, because every time he wanted to put out an issue of *ariadnefabrik* the Stasi gave him four hundred marks to pay for the paper. Schedlinski always lived a proper, poor, Prenzlauer Berg life. He says he never got the kind of money the opposition politicians did for informing, which was something like five hundred marks every time they made a report. When Schedlinski started out informing, the most he got was bags of coffee, and then he got a table, because a "friendly" Stasi who came to his house one day to talk noticed that his old table was wobbly. Schedlinski still lives in Prenzlauer Berg, in a sixth-floor walkup he discovered empty, in 1985, and appropriated. The old bathtub he brought to the squat still sits in the middle of the living room, though now it is part of a "wall" of industrial shelves where he keeps some books and one of his computers, and the room is heated now, and he has a car. He never operated at Anderson's level. There were always four or five informers at a party or reading or meeting of the Prenzlauer Berg scene, and Schedlinski started out in Prenzlauer Berg as one of the writers who informed on writers who were informing on them. Anderson supposedly informed on Schedlinski. They covered the same territory. They had the same friends.

Schedlinski's style was different, though he seems to have modelled his Prenzlauer Berg persona on the Anderson look: he has the same three-day stubble and little round glasses and short, spiky hair. He says that he never really liked Anderson as a writer—that he preferred the language of poets like Papenfuss-Gorek and Jan Faktor. Anderson was wry as an informer. He played to the Stasi's obsession with detail. When he went to exhibits, say, to spy on painters, he would always report on the height of the guests, and the size of the canvases, and even the dimensions of the gallery, whereas Schedlinski, at exhibits, would report on whether or not he liked the paintings. It was said later that if Anderson had "bad consciousness" Schedlinski had no consciousness. He is quite proud of the fact that "ninety per cent of my talks with the Stasi were about what *I* thought," as if bad impressions were less damaging than harmful information. He informed on the writer Lutz Rathenow, and told the Stasi how pushy Rathenow was and how terrible his writing was, but not, he says, how Rathenow got his manuscripts to the West, or how much money he made—which may have been because he didn't know. Rathenow was picked up a couple of times, and spent a couple of nights in prison, but Schedlinski says that *he* wasn't the reason Rathenow went to prison. He says he did Rathenow no more harm than the critics today who simply quote from Rathenow's German—"Shabby, blooming-cloud factory/Spray-can that will not be emptied/Phono-disk with a crack/Smells tattoo the city"—and demolish him that way. He never went into the kind of detail Anderson did, informing on poets. Anderson once informed on a poet named Uwe Kolbe (he was one of the writers at the Villa Massimo this winter) and supplied the Stasi with

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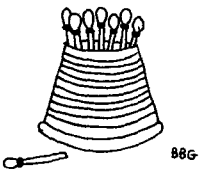
the bewildering news that Kolbe was "relieving the noun of its burden . . . with phonetic adjectival exaggerations."

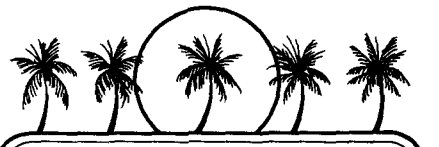
Schedlinski comes from Magdeburg, and he likes to talk about the "close East German feeling" at his favorite Magdeburg café and the people he knew there. He liked those people. They were down-and-out theologians, who came in the morning with their Bibles, and unemployed physics professors, who were using the tables to write a book about Einstein, and one "mystical" graphic artist who was old and uncompromised and utterly poor. The artist's name was Rudi Thiele. He had a car, but there was no engine in the car, and whenever he found an odd job—restoring paintings in a church, say, or painting a kiosk—he would sit behind the steering wheel and Schedlinski would push him to work. Schedlinski talks about him as a kind of father. "When Rudi died, we all asked, What was it about him? He never had money. We had to get him shoes in the winter. He lived by drawing people in the café and trading the drawings for coffee. He had a purity, and we were his disciples. We were so different, but we shared his values."

Schedlinski has written a novel about his old café. He thinks he might still be there, drinking coffee with his friends, if it hadn't been for his brother Wolfgang's "problem." Wolfgang was a merchant marine with a West car, an appendix scar from Hawaii, and seven espionage trials to his credit by the time the Stasi sold him to West Germany, where he went into business and made a lot of money and got active in a neo-Nazi party. Schedlinski describes him as "the closest to me, the one who went West, the only one who got something done." He suspects that his brother's best business was helping people escape from East Germany, because when he was nineteen he received an envelope from a town near Düsseldorf—Wolfgang was living near Düsseldorf—with two letters for him to deliver in Magdeburg, and that was when his own problem with the Stasi started. He never met the people who got the letters, and he doesn't know whether they went to prison, or whether they ever got to West Germany. He thought that if he delivered the letters, then maybe someday Wolfgang would help him leave, too, so he followed Wolfgang's instructions and dropped them off and went home. Four weeks later, the Stasi took him in to their Magdeburg station. They made him sign a paper swearing that he had never been at the station. (It was the peculiar logic at Stasi offices to collect disclaimers from people who wouldn't have had to sign them if they hadn't been there to sign them.) They showed him his brother's letters. They said that, as Wolfgang's courier, he was facing ten years in prison, and a ban on publishing anything when he got out. A "tough Stasi" did the threatening. A "sweet Stasi" offered him a deal. The sweet Stasi—his name was Joachim—told Schedlinski to think over their offer, because Schedlinski's future was not very promising to begin with, and he would certainly be ruining his life if he refused. Sometimes Schedlinski says that Joachim offered him "help and structure." Sometimes he says, "I signed to get out of there." On his third visit—sometimes he says his fourth or fifth visit—to the Magdeburg Stasi headquarters, he put his name on a *Verpflichtungserklärung*, which was a confession that amounted to a contract to inform.

The Stasi promised to leave Schedlinski alone, and for a while they did, though every now and then they brought some coffee—good coffee—and he got used to the coffee. He says that the first time he "did anything" for the Stasi was when Joachim used his apartment to watch people watching Erich Honecker, who was coming to Magdeburg for a parade. Schedlinski lived at the time on Otto von Guerickestrasse. The police had complained because he didn't have curtains, and the street was a "protocol street," and had to have curtains. But the view was perfect for Joachim. He watched the parade, and Schedlinski got to keep on doing what he liked, which was writing reviews for local papers, and writing poems.



Schedlinski was a "cold agent," which means he was in cold storage—"young and available if they needed me later." His life changed when his controls changed. It happened around the time Sascha Anderson brought Heiner Müller to Magdeburg for a reading, and also arranged for Ralf Winkler, who paints under the pseudonym A. R. Penck, to have a show there. The Stasi wanted information on their local



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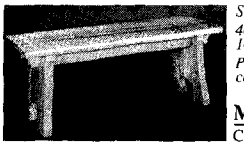

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contacts, and they asked Schedlinski. "It wasn't that bad," Schedlinski says. "No one was at risk. No one was ever sentenced for giving a reading or hanging a picture." It would be more accurate to say that artists like Müller and Penck were too important to sentence—that celebrity protected them. The artists the Stasi preyed on were people like Rainer Schedlinski, who had great longings and no currency—either in cash or in status—abroad. They chose Schedlinski because in 1983 Schedlinski would not be missed in the West, or even in the East, if he went to jail.

Schedlinski claims to have been a reluctant spy—"I said to myself that I could tell them what Heiner Müller read but not who was there, or that it was subversive." He says the Stasi punished him by killing his reviews, but his real punishment was being drafted at twenty-five—the age limit for the East German draft was twenty-six—and put to work as a doorman at an Army officers' mess, near Bad Sarow, where the officers arrived in the middle of the night waving loaded guns and demanding schnapps. Four weeks into Schedlinski's tour, one of those officers shot another officer's ear off, and Schedlinski, who was on medicine for a heart murmur, broke down and took an overdose and ended up in a mental hospital with a pacemaker in his chest—insisting that the Stasi were coming to get him. "It was the pressure of the Stasi, the military, the crazy people that got me," he told me one day, over a beer and eggrolls at the Kaiser von China, a Prenzlauer Berg restaurant he likes. "At the clinic, the really crazy people were the doctors. They kept saying, 'It's your imagination, it's run wild.' I wrote a speech for them called 'Aesthetics of the Military,' and after I read it for an hour they just locked me up, with a diagnosis of paranoia, which is what I wanted. Then they sent me to another clinic, where everybody was crazy. I had to stay inside, but, like everywhere, you find people you want to talk to. There was this one guy who was always running by my window in a jogging suit. One day, he saw me. He called to me, 'Hey, what club are you in?' I said, 'I'm not in any club.' And he gave me some advice. He said, 'I had the same problem yesterday, but today I'm a maniac.' "

Schedlinski wove rugs at the asylum, and cleaned the library. He read Camus, Benjamin, Flann O'Brien, Lars Gustafsson, and a lot of medical books, and decided that he already knew everything those "smart books" said. After six months, the doctors let him go, and he headed for Prenzlauer Berg, where he knew a girl with an apartment. When he talks about his breakdown now, he says either that "pressure" from the Stasi caused it or that the Stasi were "no big deal" and never did anything terrible. The Stasi used to come to his Magdeburg café, and he says that everybody knew who they were, and that "we didn't take them seriously"—that he and his friends sent them notes and joked about it afterward. He says that even the man who organized all the underground exhibits in Magdeburg knew he was talking to Stasi. "It was a conflict for him," Schedlinski says. "But in the end he hired me and another Stasi to install his heating."

The Stasi traced Schedlinski to Prenzlauer Berg when he went to the dentist and had to register an address to get insurance papers. Two Stasi came to his squat and took him in—sometimes he says that it was "prison for a few months," and sometimes that it was "not prison in the ordinary sense but interrogation." The charges this time were "asocial behavior" and "illegal residence," and then the Stasi added "possession of foreign currency," because Schedlinski had just got five hundred marks for his first West publication. The name of his story was "Berlin Simultan." It came out in an anthology of twelve "new German storytellers" and was considered opposition fiction, and the West Berliners who had come to Prenzlauer Berg for "culture tourism" and carried the manuscript out thought that Schedlinski was very courageous, like Sascha Anderson.

"I clarified in my own mind what I could tell the Stasi, and after that it was no problem," Schedlinski told me. "They'd ask me, 'Where did you go on New Year's Eve?' and I'd say, 'Lutz Rathenow's place, and we played Monopoly.' I thought they'd expel me,

or offer me something. They knew I was untrustworthy, but they were fairly friendly. They had to report to their own bosses—had to keep them happy—and I had no scruples about that. I thought, If the Stasi want to finance the underground—fine. People knew I was Stasi anyway."

Actually, nobody but the Stasi knew that Rainer Schedlinski was Stasi. There were rumors about his being Stasi, the way there were rumors about Anderson, and, in a way, the rumors protected him. And then, too, it is unlikely that any of his friends—except, maybe, friends like Anderson, who were informing on him—followed him to the parking lot where he met his control or to the house in the country where he made his reports. By all accounts, his friends were happy when he started editing *ariadnefabrik*. He told them it was "a new concept"—critical essays about "the Prenzlauer Berg thought"—and people like the opposition pastor Wolfgang Ullmann, who sits in the Bundestag now, and the poet Elke Erb and Anderson himself sent manuscripts. Schedlinski didn't know Anderson was Stasi, and it is hard to believe that Anderson knew *he* was Stasi, though some people claim to have "proof" that Anderson was so valuable to the Stasi that when he went West he was given the names of all the other Prenzlauer Berg contacts. Mainly, what Schedlinski knew about Anderson was that Anderson had come to Magdeburg with Heiner Müller, and had written for *ariadnefabrik*, and had even sent him a photocopy machine.

The first issue of *ariadnefabrik* came out in 1986—fifty pages of computer printout bound in grainy black construction paper—and after that Schedlinski managed to publish every second month. "I told the Stasi about my new concept," he says. "I told them, 'I'm going to put out this review,' and it was no problem, because the Stasi were basically organizing everything." He insists that the four hundred marks an issue was their only "contribution." He doesn't say where he got eight or nine thousand Deutsche marks for a Japanese computer, or a thousand marks to pay his friend Andreas Koziol to do the typing. Most issues ran to fifty or seventy copies—the law in East Germany was that you could publish up to ninety-nine copies of a newspaper or a review without the government's permission—and Schedlinski sold them

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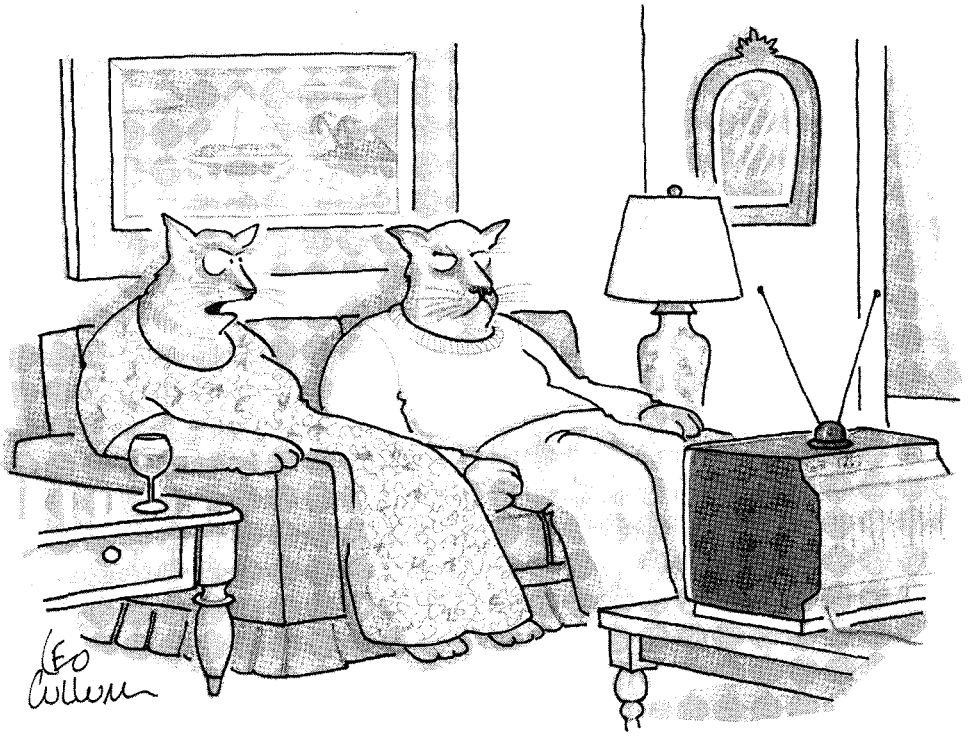
for forty marks in the underground. Occasionally, he put together an anthology of stories and poems and ran off a thousand copies on a wax-process mimeograph and sold them, too. Eventually, he bought a photo-offset printer, but then the Wall came down and he never got to use it.

Years ago, Schedlinski thought about moving West. He got a visa in 1988, and started crossing into West Berlin, and once he talked to Anderson about simply staying. Anderson tried to talk him out of it, and eventually the girl he was seeing did talk him out of it. He says he is glad now that he stayed at home. "The West German mentality is not convenient for me" is how he puts it. "The West is not much better than the East—only brighter. That was the first thing I discovered there. The second was that in a bar you always paid for your own drink. It isn't as social as over here. There's not so much solidarity. In the West, there are cafés for artists with silk scarves, cafés for artists with dogs, but no cafés for just artists together. People in the West want to be different. To be 'different' here, you always had to form a group, and step out of society together—or else you were the only loser."

Schedlinksi went to work at Galrev the day it opened, two years ago. He takes a proprietary interest in the place, although it was in many ways Anderson's project. Anderson organized it. He put in money, and designed a nice house signature cover—a diagonal slash of color separating the Futura graphics from the illustration—and bought the word processors and the copiers, and even a Heidelberger Druckmaschinen printer, which Schedlinski says is the Ferrari of printers and costs about seventy thousand marks. But the press is run as a coöperative, and today it may be one of the few places left in Prenzlauer Berg where Schedlinski can get a job—though Prenzlauer Berg people tend to think that it's hypocritical and "Christian" to get too angry about informers like Schedlinski, that it's something people pandering to the West do, and this gives him a kind of protection. Most of the people he wounded in Prenzlauer Berg leave him alone, so that no one will mistake them for strident, moralistic West people. Or they treat him like a victim himself, which, in a way, he is. Or they get together with him and discuss the ironies of "German identity." The novelist Detlef Opitz—"I could have got him in trouble, but I didn't, I told the Stasi regular, normal things," Schedlinski says—invited him to the beach for a couple of days this winter "to talk it out and clear up the friendship and also to learn more about informers for a novel he's writing." They spent two quiet days at Ahrenshoop, and taped two hundred and fifty pages of conversation that Schedlinski prefers to call "essays and short poems," and got the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* to pay for the hotel.



"Oh, yeah? When's the last time you dragged anything in?"

• •

Every morning at about eleven, Schedlinski drives to Galrev. He checks the machines that Anderson bought, and settles down to work on his projects—an American anthology and an anthology of old East German underground papers and a "postmodern-arts magazine" called *Warten: Das Magazin*, which Anderson brought to Galrev, and which is supposed to be "about everything from cows to mathematics" but is really about sex and "anarchy" and has violent, expensive color graphics and pornographic vignettes, and clearly has the market in mind, since some of the text is in English. Anderson comes in sometimes. He is "in and out," Schedlinski says, and does what he has to and doesn't say much to anyone. Relations are cool at Galrev now. "The people are not clear among themselves" is how one of Anderson's friends describes it.

Anderson rarely calls Schedlinski anymore, but Schedlinski calls him, in West Berlin, when he needs to order supplies or has problems with the machines. Schedlinski thinks that "Anderson doesn't find his position in the whole thing"—meaning that Anderson refuses to talk about why he "belonged" to the Stasi, or even to say that he belonged to the Stasi. Schedlinski says that last fall, after the Frankfurt Book Fair, Anderson bought his own file on the black market. It cost him thirty thousand marks, but presumably it was his "victim's" file, and had to do with the reports other informers had made on *him*. The last three folders of Anderson's "informer's" file—the folders covering his years in the West—are missing, and, while informers who operated only in East Germany are not accountable under West German law (which is now Germany's law), there is some question about informers who operated in West Germany, and who could conceivably be brought to trial for espionage. No one knows whether Anderson has those files, or whether those

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files were destroyed, or were stolen by people who wanted to blackmail Anderson, or to protect him, or whether they were part of a deal to keep Anderson from talking. The Stasi recruited Anderson because of the checks he forged in Dresden, and now there are rumors connecting him with other crimes, and people say that the important "West Stasi" who figure in Anderson's missing folders—some of them West Germans in the government—may be using those crimes to "persuade" Anderson not to expose *them*.

There is nothing you learn about any one Stasi that does not implicate dozens of other Germans in the Stasi. And when tourists drive by Galrev on their Prenzlauer Berg "route," and reporters bang on the door to see the place where Sascha Anderson and Rainer Schedlinski print books, Galrev becomes another *point de repère* on an already perplexing moral landscape. Schedlinski lets them in. He tells them the things he didn't do: he didn't tell the Stasi about the *Tageszeitung* plotting to hide newspapers on Polish trucks to get them into East Germany; he didn't tell the Stasi about Lutz Rathenow's money; he didn't tell the Stasi about the really "criminal" things his friend Detlef Opitz did; he didn't tell the Stasi about the politics of his friend Cornelia Jentzsch, who works at Galrev, only about her boyfriend; he didn't tell the Stasi about the plans the peace activist Gerd Poppe had for demonstrating at Russian missile sites, only his "impressions" of dinner at Poppe's house.

Last summer, a producer from Westdeutscher Rundfunk came to Prenzlauer Berg to film a "portrait of the poet Rainer Schedlinski." He returned in January "for additions," carrying pages from Lutz Rathenow's files—Rathenow was passing his files around—and showed Schedlinski a report he had made in 1985 about Rathenow's collecting signatures for a petition about the immigration law, and then he filmed Schedlinski's face. Rathenow said later that with those reports Schedlinski made "my deepest intentions" public, and Schedlinski doesn't know why he felt that way, since Rathenow had published the petition himself in all the underground newspapers, and even in *ariadnefabrik*, and had talked a lot about getting the signatures to the West for publicity. Schedlinski doesn't really see the difference between making your own deepest intentions public and having someone else do it for you—though he knows when the West German press is doing it to him. He denied the rumors about him until the files were opened. He denied them on television until he was handed a copy of his "confession contract."

The first real "evidence" about Schedlinski appeared in *Stern* in January. It was a copy of his report about playing Monopoly at Rathenow's on New Year's Eve. Then he "confessed" in an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. And after that there were three or four interviews a day, because the Stasi were an ongoing sport—"victims and oppressors," people called it—and the players were expected to confront each other on television and in newspaper columns, and the old Stasi controls, who have good jobs now or are living on pleasant pensions, were paid to follow them, as commentators. Schedlinski got a lot of attention (though he sometimes describes himself as "a victim of press terror"). He wrote articles for all the important German papers, and for a Zurich weekly called *Wochenzeitung*, and for a Dutch news magazine called *Elsevier*. He started a book of essays about "the role of the Stasi in the G.D.R." He was invited to talk about "Germanistics and political science" at Georgetown University, and to read at the Goethe Institute in Chicago. "I'm not nervous," he says. "I never thought I was telling anything important."

PEOPLE who work at the Stasi Commission have had a common reaction. Many of them thought at first that the files should be closed. They thought that the files would occasion more grief than clarity; that the victims, in their disgust, would become "Stasi," and the Stasi would become "victims," and nothing would be served; that the best thing for East Germany was "forgiveness." The head of the commission was a pastor named Joachim Gauck, and he was there to remind

Germans that the commission was not a court, and had nothing to do with judgment or retribution—that it was serving "truth" and a higher justice, and that, whatever the politicians said, *the message was, if not* "Love thine enemies," then "Know thyself." But it turned out that after studying the files—trying to make sense of millions of pieces of paper full of lunatic speculation about "hostile negative basic attitude" and "enemy behavior" that ran from why Wolf Biermann served cognac to a girlfriend after making love to whether Biermann would leave East Germany if he got the news that his grandmother, in Hamburg, was dying—most people at the Stasi Commission were convinced that the files had to be opened. The intimacy of the files horrified them. Spiros Simitis, who was one of the West German advisers to the Stasi Commission, says it was so horrifying that he decided, reluctantly, that victims *must* have access to their files—even though he could see "nothing good coming out of this except, maybe, that Germans will see how disgusting the entire system was, how everybody ended up lying." Michael Zabel, whose office administers the files, ended up believing that East Germans would have "no future at all" until they confronted their Stasi past and knew the extent of their betrayal. Geiger himself decided that access had to do with the East Germans' "right to control their lives"—with convincing the East Germans that they finally had this right, in "Germany," and could decide for themselves whether someone who had betrayed them "was going to keep on sitting on their couch once a week and drinking their whiskey." I saw Geiger one day after he had read a file involving a sixteen-year-old boy who had told a joke about Honecker to the warden at his church. The joke had to do with Bush, Gorbachev, and Honecker being followed by cannibals, and the cannibals refusing to turn around when Bush offered them money, and even when Gorbachev offered them "paradise," but disappearing immediately when Honecker told them, "In two hundred metres, we'll be in East Germany." The warden repeated the joke to the Stasi, and the boy was thrown into prison for two years. Geiger could not believe what he was reading. He is a mild man, but he gets furious when people say that informers "did

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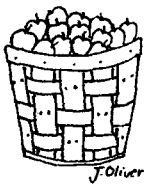
no harm," because, he says, the more he reads, the more he understands that the whole of East German society was built on "nightmare, insecurity, and betrayal." The harm haunts him. He told me that one Sunday he was sitting alone in his office, going over a file, "and all of a sudden I heard a cry, and looked around—and then I realized that it was me crying."

Some of the Prenzlauer Berg intellectuals went to a meeting in March and talked about convening a "Russell Tribunal of victims," where informers would be charged with crimes against humanity—and, presumably, a salutary remorse would be their sentence. It was considered a Biermann sort of idea, because very few of the Prenzlauer Berg informers use words like "crimes," or even "right" and "wrong," when they talk about themselves. They say, "I did it for Germany" or "I never did any harm" or "I was frightened" or "I wanted protection"—and turn themselves into victims. The most popular entertainment in East Berlin right now is a weekly consciousness-raising session for victims and informers at a place called the House at Checkpoint Charlie, which an enterprising West Berliner opened years ago at the old crossing. The Stasi who participate call it an "interior investigation." Henryk Broder prefers to calls it an "obsession." He says, "When you see a guy sitting there crying with the neighbor who spied on him, when you see a guy who was persecuted and maybe tortured wanting to talk it over with the Stasi who did it—that's Germany in a nutshell." Some of his German friends say he shouldn't be talking about victims and oppressors, because the Stasi are "a German affair."



My friend Wiglaf Droste, who is a journalist in West Berlin, is worried about a "cult of victims" taking over Germany. He agrees with Broder (with whom he disagrees on nearly everything else) about what it means when Germans start casting themselves as "victims." When the rumors started about Sascha Anderson, Droste wrote that maybe the scandal would keep Anderson too busy to write "his bad poems," but now, looking at the attention that Biermann and even Rathenow are getting by being such persistent victims, he worries that people are beginning to look at *their* bad poems, and even their bad prose, with something close to reverence—that art is getting to be a matter of politics. He is uneasy about the Stasi Commission "encouraging victims to make themselves interesting, for the press, for their 'art,' for each other." He thinks that right now Germans are indulging a very unhealthy, very German preoccupation with themselves, and that in their search for "identity" they are beginning to sound like Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen, searching for the blue flower, and are making "Germany" the only subject in the world worthy of their attention.

Germans are very complicated when they talk about remorse: they want remorse to be "correct." So they tend to speak in moral metaphors—the Stasi for the Communist state, and the Communist state for the Nazi state, and the Nazi state for "Germany." Sometimes they seem to be saying that they can "solve" their past by resolving their present, that correct consciousness and a correct remorse will cancel past evasions, as if (a Jewish friend in Berlin said this) with enough attention and concentration they will arrive at some "final solution to the Nazi question." The irony escapes them. In difficult times, Germans are not interested in irony. They prefer to talk about the "Germanness" of victims and the "Germanness" of informers and, especially, the Germanness of informers who had some loyalty to the G.D.R. and are left now with only the evidence of betrayal.

Anderson doesn't want to talk about the "Biermann affair." He spends most of his time in Jena, where he has a girlfriend, and keeps an answering machine on his Berlin phone. Biermann refuses to talk about the affair, because he has an agreement with the people at *Der Spiegel*, and he talks exclusively for them. He has a lot of grievances. The Stasi devoted itself to collecting evidence of his "destructive character," and the Politburo met repeatedly to plot his ruin, and he is alarmed now when East German writers like Stefan Heym talk about Joachim Gauck's being "blinded by hate . . . and worse than the Stasi ever was" or accuse the painter Bärbel Bohley of "McCarthyism" because she wants to discover the people who betrayed her. Some writers think Biermann has claimed, by grievance, the role of arbiter."He's the star

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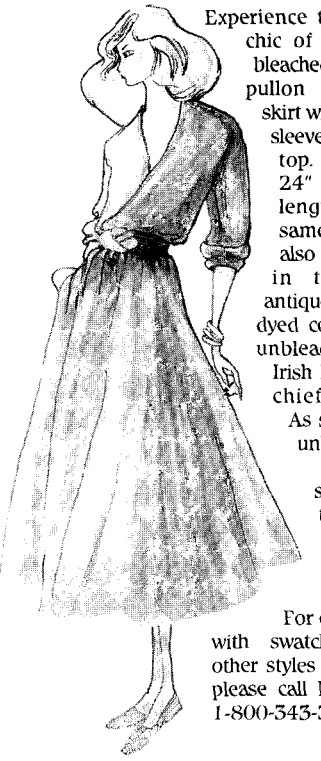

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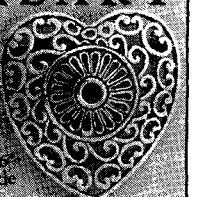

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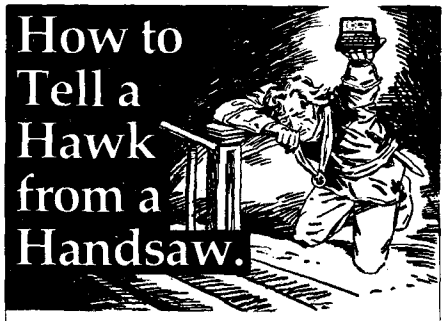

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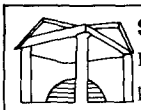

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of this whole thing, but he's no longer of the East," Papenfuss-Gorek says. "A great many things have happened in the East without him. He had the East as long as he was here." Biermann tells reporters who call him what he told me—that "the subject is closed"—and two weeks later he takes up the subject again on the pages of *Der Spiegel*, and makes a lot of money, and people read him and say that Wolf Biermann has never suffered so profoundly or written so well.

The real Stasi, of course, are still around. It is easy to spot them in Berlin. The agents who have not retired on pensions are driving taxis. The officers are television stars, advising their talk-show hosts as to the credibility of victims who complain, and the authenticity of their files, and the moral qualities of the people who spied on them. The generals are enjoying the good life on the Bavarian lakes, waiting for trials they will almost certainly win (with the exception of Erich Mielke, the Stasi chief, who is on trial not for the terror he inflicted on East Germany for so many years but for murdering two Nazis in 1931). Even Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski—who was the official money launderer for the G.D.R., with a state holding company, and billions of marks invested in companies all over the West—has retired to a villa on the Tegernsee, which he learned to love on business visits to Franz Josef Strauss and other old leaders of the West German right who were making a lot of money out of Willy Brandt's socialist *Ostpolitik*. Legally, they are no more accountable than most informers are accountable. Legally, they were salaried functionaries of the East German state, and they were responsible for "order" in that state. ("But I loved you all," Mielke says now.)

In January, two conscript soldiers were sentenced for a shooting at the Berlin Wall—but not their general, who had given the orders about shooting anyone who tried to flee. It was not so different from Sascha Anderson and Rainer Schedlinski's getting exposed, while their controls hired literary agents and sold themselves as "historians." The files that might have implicated any of those Stasi in "actionable" crimes disappeared in the deal between the Stasi and the Berlin burghers who couldn't work their software and never thought to call up BASF or ask a West German to do it for them, and this is why informers complain about being "victims," and say that *they* are being ruined while the "system" goes free.

By now, even some of the people who created the system are blaming Stasi informers for the system—a situation I have heard compared to the Nazis' blaming the Gestapo. It makes life simpler, for East Germans and even for some West Germans—West Germans who in one way or another supported the Communist regime, either because they made money from it or because they spied for it themselves or because they were ingenuous or deluded about it, or sympathetic to it out of "socialist" principles, or because they feared Fascism in West Germany more than Communism in East Germany or because the division of Germany was comfortable, or even because the Cold War was a satisfying and convenient distraction from their own history. If the judgment of Nazi crimes (and German complicity) begun at Nuremberg stopped because of East Germany, it stopped in time to keep a generation of West Germans from having to account for themselves, to each other and to their victims and to "history." The Cold War "rehabilitated" that generation faster, and much more successfully, than it could ever have rehabilitated itself, and some of that generation is still running West Germany. It does not have much of an appetite for accountability. It considers itself a generation of realists, and is more comfortable, in the end, doing business with apparatchiks of the old East German élite than with any of the messy, moralizing "sixties radicals in Earth shoes" on either side of the invisible Wall. It understands that protecting the men who once ran East Germany is really a kind of self-protection. Geiger says that the people who want to avoid a discussion of the Stasi now, in the interest of "unity" or "healing" or "stability," are keeping not only East Germans from understanding what happened to them but all Germans from understanding.

—JANE KRAMER

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Mr. White, brother-in-law of the late T. Harvey Mathis, was an outdoorsman and conservationalist long before that word became politically correct.—*Newsletter of the Atlanta Chapter of the Building Owners and Managers Association.*

Or was even coined.

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Soote Season

SPRING began with a flurry of big-orchestra concerts. Although the Metropolitan Opera season ended last month, the orchestra and James Levine remained busy: recording "Don Carlos," "The Rite of Spring," the Mussorgsky-Ravel "Pictures at an Exhibition," and a disk of Verdi ballet music; visiting Canada (next week they go off to Spain); and finding time for two Carnegie concerts. Mr. Levine's players produce the richest, fullest sound of any American orchestra. At the first concert, they reached top form about halfway through the Mussorgsky-Ravel "Pictures," in which the woodwind and brass soloists were characterful and alert. In the prelude to Act III of "Die Meistersinger," an encore, the string tone was glowing; cello sound doesn't come better than this. When the big G-major chord arrived, the brasses were too loud (the Met brasses and drums are often too loud), but they were purely tuned and warmly sonorous. The first half of the program was ten of Mahler's "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" songs. (The original, 1892 version of "Das Himmlische Leben," familiar as the finale of the Fourth Symphony, had its American première.) Thomas Hampson was the singer. He has been prominent this season in opera, concert, and recital, and on record. (Three different record companies took pages in the program book advertising their Hampson wares, from Bach and Mozart to Ives and Cole Porter.) He has an exceptionally fine baritone and a good musical mind; there is never anything thoughtless in what he does. He opened the Philharmonic season singing American folk songs (in Copland arrangements), and demonstrated that "the gift to be simple" is just about the only gift he lacks. His account of the "Magic Horn" songs was elaborately and consciously inflected; there was note-by-note editing, a want of both legato and naturalness.

Mahler, again, filled most of the second bill. It began with a smooth, graceful account of Mozart's A-major Concerto K. 414, Mr. Levine doubling as conductor and pianist, and continued with "Das Lied von der Erde," in which Waltraud Meier and Michael Sylvester were the soloists. Mr. Levine's Mahler leaves me unstirred, admiring only of the high-quality playing. He reduces the scores to details—expertly, even lovingly, executed, with concern and enthusiasm, but unconnected. In both the "Wunderhorn" and the "Lied" the singers were often drowned; at the close of "Abschied" one could only see, not hear, that Miss Meier was singing "Ewig." Her soprano—although she sings alto and mezzo roles, her voice now sounds like a short lyric soprano—flowered finely on D, E-flat, E, and F but faded below. What one heard was always agreeable, but monochrome—too even in accent, too equable in the utterance of words. Mr. Sylvester was sturdy, prosaic, weak in the low register, and non-legato. The viola solo at the close of "Von der Schönheit"—a rare episode of truly pianissimo playing—was an expressive high point.

Riccardo Muti made his Carnegie farewell as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra. In the early years of his Philadelphia tenure (which began in 1980), he seemed content to build upon the romantic Ormandy sound while tidying and tightening what had grown slack. Then he became more assertive, and the sound of the orchestra grew harder. This final concert was a dispiriting affair. Mr. Muti was like a driver whose touch on wheel, brake, and accelerator is sure but who never lifts his eyes to the landscape. He began with Cherubini's Symphony, a work that Toscanini championed but most Cherubini commentators rate below the least of his overtures. Some artful woodwind writing in the Trio provides a point of interest. The orchestra played without much animation and not always neatly.

"If the shoe fits, buy it."

The second half was Rossini's Stabat Mater. Difficult to know how seriously to take the work. (J. W. Davison, a London *Times* critic, had no doubt: as practical criticism he published a catchy set of "Bologna Quadrilles"—which was hastily withdrawn by its publishers when they discovered the sacred source of the jolly tunes.) But as a product of felicitous,

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animated, ingenious composition the Stabat is easy to revere and enjoy; some of its ideas found more serious fulfillment in Verdi's Requiem, which began as a memorial to Rossini. The cast was not up to Rossini's demands. Carol Vaness, the soprano, was in poor voice; she lacked exact trills and an easy flow to top C. Delores Ziegler, the alto, Frank Lopardo, the tenor, and Roberto Scandiuzzi, a promising bass, had modern voices trained for volume at the top and underdeveloped below; the leaping lines came and went, and little notes between the big notes were slighted. "*Lente le semicrome*" ("the sixteenth-notes slow") is an instruction for the "Hostias" of Verdi's Requiem. Rossini would have taken it for granted that in similar phrases a singer would not be made to scamper. But Mr. Muti beat metronomically through moments that need time if they are to tell.

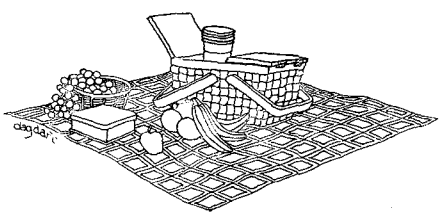
Georg Solti returned to the Philharmonic after sixteen years; in 1976 he led a pension-fund benefit performance of the Choral Symphony, and this month he conducted another pension-fund benefit. The bill was the "Tristan" Prelude and "Liebestod," Liszt's "Les Préludes," and the Fantastic Symphony. In his eightieth year, Sir Georg remains as ferociously energetic as ever. The insistently high-tension performances were not enjoyable; "Les Préludes" sounded vulgar. The week before, the Philharmonic, under Kurt Masur, gave a plain, dull performance of Mahler's First Symphony, preceded by the "Songs of a Wayfarer" cycle, in which Håkan Hagegård was a plain, dull soloist. Whereas Mr. Hampson did all too much with Mahler's lines, Mr. Hagegård did all too little. The concert was recorded by Teldec. I can't think who will buy the disk: on CD alone there are already over forty recordings of Mahler's First (including those conducted by Mr. Levine, Mr. Muti, and Sir Georg).

IT might be rash to suggest that Delius's operas are unlikely ever to enter the repertory. Who fifty years ago would have predicted the large presence of Monteverdi's, Handel's, Janáček's on the modern stage? None of Delius's six are without their musical rewards, and at least two of them—"A Village Romeo and Juliet" and "Fennimore and Gerda"—appear more and more often. "Fennimore," the last of the six, was given its New York première last month by the Juilliard Opera Center.

Beecham was Delius's first great champion. He brought "A Village Romeo" to Covent Garden in 1910, revived it in 1920, and conducted it at the Royal College in 1934. In 1935, he produced "Koanga" at Covent Garden. In 1953, in Oxford, he conducted the première of "Irmelin"—Delius's first opera, completed in 1892. (I reviewed it and, I confess, made merry with the incompetent libretto instead of stressing the musical merits.) Although "Fennimore" is dedicated to Beecham, he never conducted it, and wrote about it severely in his book on Delius:

> The problems confronting successful production are not few in number. None of the characters (at least on paper) makes a sympathetic appeal to us, and each one of them talks lengthily and monotonously about his or her "complicated state of mind." Only towards the end, when it is almost too late, does the piece take on any really dramatic character. . . . There are few lyrical passages and of genuinely vocal melody scarcely a trace. . . . Although there is no fault to find with the orchestral portion of the score, which is in Frederick's ripest and most sumptuous manner, its attractions do not entirely avail to gloss over the predicament of three rather dreary people who have nothing to sing.

Damaging verdict. "Fennimore," which was composed in German, had its première in Frankfurt, in 1919, but was not done in England until 1962, in a BBC studio performance. Six years later, a small London company staged it, and there was another small production in 1970. After those performances, I thought that Beecham was wrong: "Fennimore" seemed to me wonderfully lyrical. Although the characters do not come to life, their plights do, and are acted out against the passing seasons; Delius's lovely nature pictures play an unaffectedly dramatic role. Niels wins Fennimore in autumn, loses her in winter, gains Gerda in spring. In Delian fashion, passions, griefs, ephemeral joys, artistic aspiration are keenly represented against a longer perspective than that of individual lives. Other performances followed: London productions in 1979 (with Rosalind Plowright as Fennimore) and 1990 (at the English National); a Danish Radio performance (with Elisabeth Söderström), issued by Angel in 1976; a St. Louis production in 1981, which was taken to the Edinburgh Festival in 1983; a 1988 Bielefeld production, by John Dew, which won warm reviews. And now the New York première, which was based on the St. Louis production.



Delius drew his libretto from the novel "Niels Lyhne" (1880), by Jens Peter Jacobsen (whose "Gurresange" provided the text of Schoenberg's "Gurre-Lieder"). In boyhood, Niels loved his cousin Erik—a Hans Hansen to Niels's Tonio Kröger. Now Erik, an aspirant painter, and Niels, an aspirant writer, are both in love with their cousin Fennimore. She marries Erik; he becomes dissolute and unsatisfactory, and, three years later, she has an affair with the gentle Niels. Erik is killed, thrown from a cart. In guilty remorse, Fennimore (in C minor) breaks with Niels. Three years later, he proposes to the adolescent Gerda, a neighbor's daughter, and is accepted. Delius ended there (in C major), although at one point he considered completing Jacobsen's tale: Gerda and her child die; Niels goes to war and is killed.

Delius, who had written five operas before he saw any of them staged, embarked on his sixth after assisting at German productions of "Koanga" and "A Village Romeo." The latter's "Walk to the Paradise Garden" was, like the extended interludes in "Pelléas et Mélisande," a late addition inspired by the exigencies of scene shifting. "Pelléas" had appeared in 1902, the year after Delius completed "A Village Romeo," and it left its mark, formally, on "Fennimore," which is constructed in eleven short "pictures," divided by interludes. Delius's new aim was to write a modern opera with Strindbergian, not Symboliste, subject matter. "Brevity and conciseness" were his end, he said in an interview at the time of the "Fennimore" première:

> Suggestion will replace masses of detail in opera, as in modern painting. By these methods I believe it will be possible for opera to become the supreme vehicle for the expression of the finest and subtlest psychological ideas.

Frank Corsaro, the Juilliard Opera Center's artistic director and the stage director of its "Fennimore," has been Delius's champion in this country: he produced the American premières of "Koanga" (Washington, 1970), "A Village Romeo" (Washington, 1972; taken up by the New York City Opera

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for three seasons), "Fennimore" (the St. Louis production), and "Margot la Rouge" (St. Louis, 1983). All these were collaborations with the designer Ronald Chase and were executed in a similar manner: the action set behind a dense gauze curtain, onto which is projected a continuous show of films, photographs, and paintings, while the singers and any necessary props appear beyond the gauze, picked out in pools of light. This mode of presentation seems at first both practicable and imaginative but soon proves debilitating: it puts a barrier between the singers and their audience. The mode is particularly ill-suited to Delius, since it stresses the "dreaminess," the fluidity, the wandering quality of the music, not its strengths, and makes him sound like the composer of atmospheric "movie music" that he is sometimes accused of being.

Delius—a friend of Munch, and the owner of Gauguin's "Nevermore"—evidently had stage pictures in mind as he composed "Fennimore." One scenic direction reads:

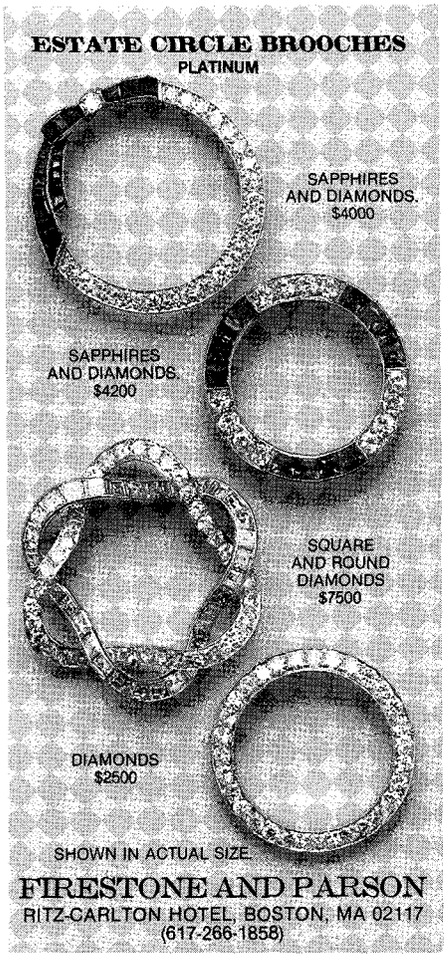
> The lower end of the Claudis' garden which reaches down to the Fjord. At the extreme end there is a small landing-stage surrounded by large old trees. In the distance can be seen the harbour, the masts of ships and the towers in the town. At the landing-stage lies a boat in which Erik and Fennimore are sitting. It is dark and the sea sparkles with phosphorescence. On the right hand side of the stage the lighted windows of the Claudis' house glimmer through the trees.

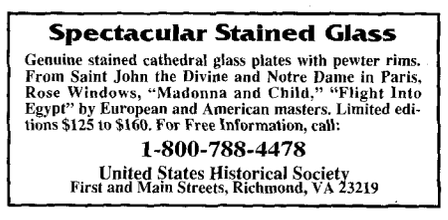
Of the original Frankfurt settings Mrs. Delius (a painter) wrote with enthusiasm, "Most thrilling, such a heavenly love-scene in the beech forest in orange autumn, and another charming love-scene in a dark old garden with the little harbour town, a lighthouse and water in the distance—a scene in the snow and ice-frozen fjord at night. Then the two scenes all bright and spring sunshine with apple blossom everywhere." A few years earlier, however, Delius had declared that "realism on the stage is nonsense, and all the scenery necessary is an impressionistic painted curtain at the back, with the fewest accessories possible." The music of "Fennimore" lasts less than eighty minutes, but the score specifies a further fifteen minutes of "pauses": five minutes to mark the first three-year break, four to mark the second, and three-minute pauses between summer, fall, and winter. Pauses of this kind—too short for the audience to get up and move about, too long for dramatic tension to be sustained—are ineffective in the theatre; most "Fennimore" directors ignore them and play the opera with a single intermission or with none. Mr. Corsaro instead filled them with long interludes of musique concrète—New Age "environmental" tapes, the sound of waves, winds, and birds, and, in the first of them, a train and bells—accompanied by projected images of water, boughs, blossoms, and birds, and by some newly invented little action scenes behind the gauze. Similar imagery and extra action accompanied the instrumental interludes. (The projection was often jerky, and some of the film had an abrupt, home-movie quality, ill-matched to the gaits of the music.) All this seemed to me a dilution of Delius's intention: "short, strong emotional impressions given in a series of terse scenes."

Nina Warren was the Fennimore, Franco Pomponi the Niels, Jay Hunter Morris the Erik, and Nancy Allen the Gerda (a tiny role). None of them came across strongly, but then they had to contend with that damn gauze, and also the acoustics of a theatre that can eat voices. (Front gauzes, however permeable, always seem to act as a damper.) "Every word must be clearly heard," Delius said, but only Mr. Morris's words were consistently clear. The Juilliard used the old English translation, by Philip Heseltine, not the new one by Julia Hollander, who directed the English National production. Although Delius wrote for large forces—four oboes, four clarinets, four bassoons—the Juilliard Opera Orchestra, conducted by Christopher Keene, sounded thinner than Juilliard orchestras are wont to do. In the final interludes, the flute and the oboe should have been urged to play with a fuller, freer rapture.

Still, as Sir Thomas said, the problems confronting successful production of "Fennimore" are not few. They had been carefully and lovingly tackled, and any dissatisfaction with Mr. Corsaro's solutions was balanced by gratitude to him and to the Juilliard for doing the opera. "Fennimore" joins "Lord Byron," "Montezuma," "The Hundred Nights," "Postcard from Morocco," "Feathertop," "Le Roi Malgré Lui," "Jakob Lenz," "Rothschild's Violin," "Hugh the Drover" in the annals of the Juilliard's publicly important and useful productions.

—Andrew Porter

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ANNALS OF GASTRONOMY

CHILIES

CHILI is strange. Its peculiarity has something to do with the fact that it is a muddled word, spelled at least three ways (chili, chile, chilli) and with at least three different meanings: it is the edible fruit of a genus of plants called *Capsicum;* it is a dried spice; and it is a hot stew. From the time Christopher Columbus mistook Hispaniolan capsicums for a form of black-pepper plant and named them accordingly, chili peppers have had a dubious identity. Even experts aren't clear about what they are: botanists think of the chili as a berry of the nightshade family, like the tomato; horticulturists consider it a fruit; New Mexico, where nearly everybody spells it with an "e," has declared it an official state vegetable.

However it is classified, chili has always been something of a provocative oddity in the cuisine of the United States. As a spice, it has played a big role only in regional cooking, such as the piquant fare of Creole, Cajun, and Tex-Mex kitchens, and that of the descendants of Spanish settlers in St. Augustine, Florida, who incorporate the blazing datil chili into seafood chowders and casseroles. As a common stew, made of ground meat and chili peppers, its reputation is déclassé; it is thought of as diner grub, in the lowly culinary company of hash, or as the eccentric obsession of boosters from cowboy country who make it into an excuse for beery cookoffs. Except insofar as it provides the occasional opportunity for sybarites to go slumming (as Elizabeth Taylor has done on Chasen's chili, in Beverly Hills), there has been little room in civilized, mainstream cookery in the United States for food generally thought to be so potent-flavored and impolite.

As an edible fruit, however, chili has a reputation that has changed dramatically in recent years. Chili peppers have become a popular symbol of chic Southwestern style; their likeness appears on souvenir T-shirts, baseball caps, and fanny packs, and also on artistic posters suitable for hanging on the wall of the most stylish kitchen. You can buy chili-pepper-shaped earrings, bolo ties, key rings, car deodorizers, wind chimes, refrigerator magnets, wax candles, and Christmas-tree lights. Chilies are the key to the recent great success of fajitas and burritos as franchised food, and of spicy chicken wings and nachos—all of which have become nearly as common as hot dogs and potato chips. There isn't a supermarket or a gourmet shop from coast to coast that doesn't have at least a small selection of once unusual chili-pepper-based sauces, seasonings, and condiments. A Stop & Shop in suburban Connecticut, for instance, now carries Le Menu Santa Fe-Style Grilled Chicken with Salsa, Healthy Choice Fajitas, Café Mexico frozen dinners, Hot or Mild Mexican Velveeta Pasteurized Process Cheese Spread with Jalapeño Peppers, Land O Lakes 4-Quart Hot Pepper Monterey Jack, Hamburger Helper in Chili Macaroni and Beef Taco flavors, Frito-Lay's Jalapeño & Cheddar Flavor Cheese Dip, and Lunch Bucket Western Style Chili with Beans—all of them spiced with chili peppers.

Long known for the blandness of its national cuisine, and as a country whose taste was best symbolized by a preference for ketchup, the United States is discovering what most of the rest of the world has recognized for centuries: that the flavor and bite of chilies is as fundamentally good as the pungency of salt and the luxury of butterfat—with the added attractions that chilies are loaded with vitamins, are cholesterol-free, and are a source of medicines that cure ailments ranging from rhinitis to phantom-limb pain. As a matter of fact, Americans are no longer burdened with the reputation of being a nation of ketchup-eaters, because salsa, made from chili peppers, is now more widely consumed in this country than ketchup ever was.

New Mexico is America's leading chili producer, followed by California, Texas, Arizona, and Louisiana; and it is primarily in New Mexico that the fruit of the capsicum plant has been elevated from a cash crop to a cultural fetish. There is probably no one who boasts that he is from the Great Kohlrabi State or the Land of Ten Thousand Brussels Sprouts, but there are plenty of New Mexicans who are proud to say that they're chiliheads and who have transformed their affection for the native pod into a cult. New Mexicans make a big point of distinguishing their food from that of Mexico, and also from the Mexican-influenced cuisines of Arizona, Texas, and California; and a central difference is the crucial role that chili peppers play. You might get a couple of hot jalapeños

"It's a brilliant piece of writing, Ted, but we feel that it might prove offensive to those who've been convicted of violent crimes."

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as a condiment with barbecue in Texas, and a bowl of Tex-Mex chili con carne is likely to contain a lot of the pepper's heat; but in New Mexico chilies—as a vegetable, whole or puréed—are the dominant ingredient of nearly all the unique state dishes.

Nowhere except in New Mexico has the chili been so exalted and exploited for all its non-culinary possibilities. For example, the Chile Shop, a gift boutique in Santa Fe, has done booming business for the last seven years with an inventory based on chili things—not only a vast array of dried chilies, chili powder, chili sauces (including some with such evocative names as Maddog, Inner Beauty, and Devil's Tingle), chili-flavored peanut butter, chili-flavored honey, and salsa samplers and gift boxes but also glassware and china with chilies on them. Some twenty years ago, a group of zealots formed an organization called the International Connoisseurs of Green and Red Chile, whose membership rites can include standing before a civic official in the town of Las Cruces with a native New Mexican pepper raised high in one hand and pledging "allegiance and loyal support to Chile in all forms and preparations." A recent newsletter from the Connoisseurs' executive director began, "Greetings, all fellow lovers of the pod!" and concluded "VIVA CHILE!!!" One member told us that they had a chili anthem, sung to the tune of "El Rancho Grande," but that it had been sung only two or three times in the last twenty years, because the words were hard to remember.

IN the southern part of New Mexico's Rio Grande Valley, chili isn't a trend or a fad or a cult. It is the staff of life. Long before pepper-spiked nachos became a standard bar food and a Super Bowl snack, the people of the Hatch and Rincon Valleys, between the towns of Las Cruces and Truth or Consequences, made their living on family farms growing, picking, and processing long green chilies. Long greens, which turn bright red when they are ripe, are the type of pepper that is known as New Mexican and whose most popular cultivar, New Mexico No. 6-4, a variation of New Mexico No. 6, was developed at New Mexico State University, in Las Cruces, in the late nineteen-fifties. Long greens are the state's distinctive pepper, grown in the arid flatlands of the south and the

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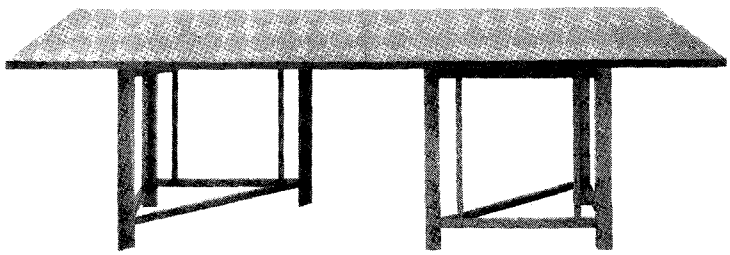

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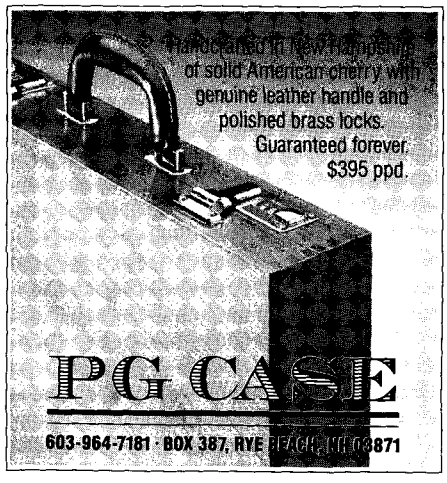
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mountains of the north, with different varieties, known as land races, named for their growing area: Chimayo chilies, Dixon chilies, Velarde chilies. They all have a long, firm-fleshed pod that makes them ideal for chilies rellenos (stuffed peppers) when they are fresh and whole, and for earthy stews when they are chopped, and they are traditional for use in carne adobada (chili-marinated pork) when they are dried and puréed. In addition, they are the basis of many of the state's humble and ever-popular favorite dishes, including green-chili cheeseburgers, stacked-up enchiladas, and Frito pie (which is also known to enthusiasts as a stomach grenade). Long greens can be fairly hot, going as high as five thousand Scoville units—nearly as high as some jalapeños. (Scoville units are the modern version of the Scoville Organoleptic Test, which was originally developed by the pharmacologist Wilbur Scoville in 1912 as a way of measuring the heat of the peppers used in the muscle salve Heet. Five thousand Scoville units would be considered very hot by most people, but even that is piddling compared with the blistering fury of the habanero pepper, which can reach three hundred thousand S.U.) But it is not raw heat that makes long greens distinctive. It is their incomparable flavor, which the Santa Fe chef Mark Miller has described as "sweet and earthy, with a clarity that seems to reflect the skies and landscapes of New Mexico."

Hatch, a town of 1,084 people, is a good place to see and savor chilies without the high-powered marketing buzz they have received elsewhere in the last few years. You can smell chilies in the autumn air when you drive up from the south on Route 185, an old two-lane highway from Las Cruces that passes through Doña Ana and Radium Springs. The green ones, not yet ripened in the fields, exude a perfume that is clear and bracing but gives no hint of pungency. All along the roads leading into town, wisps of smoke curl up above the fields into the turquoise sky as farmers roast green chilies in big mesh drums over wood or propane fires. The roasting pods smell luscious and tasty, and as the drum's mesh rubs the singed, blackened skin from the peppers their flesh turns supple and they glisten celadon green. When they are cooked and have been retrieved from the drum, they give off the unique perfume of an authentic New Mexican meal: sharp and robust, flavored by the soil and the sun. The roadside roasters, who generally set up shop on the bed of a pickup truck, sell a forty-pound canvas sack of long greens for a few dollars. Locals either roast them at home or buy them already roasted to freeze for use in stews and sauces through the winter.

Many chilies aren't roasted when green but are allowed to ripen, and when they turn red they are strung up in braided ropes, known as *ristras*, in rows along adobe walls and on make-shift wooden racks, where they dry in the sun; they make a colorful decoration until the pods get picked off and used in cooking. Throughout the town of Hatch, houses and shops are draped with *ristras* by late August; there are *ristras* dangling along the sides of sheds and barns, and hanging out for show and sale at every farm stand. For Labor Day weekend, bright-red peppers are displayed everywhere, because this is when Hatch holds a two-day Chile Festival—the annual celebration of the pepper harvest.

Early on Saturday, August 31, 1991, the first day of the twentieth annual Chile Festival, we had to slow our car to a crawl to maneuver along Hall Street, the town's main drag, which is about five blocks long and, both because it was under repair and because there had been heavy rains recently, was more mud than pavement. As we crept along, we saw people at a streetside lean-to nailing up a big paper banner that said "Hatch No. 1 Chile." They were arranging *ristras* and burlap bags full of long green chilies in anticipation of selling them to some of the fifteen thousand visitors expected at the festival. The Las Cruces *Courier*, which had temporarily shut its Hatch branch office—a storefront on Hall Street—because of the street repairs, reopened it for the festival and turned it into a hospitality suite.

At Dora's Cafe, at the other end of Hall Street, the proprietor and chef, Alex Martinez, was miffed that the parade this year wasn't routed past his place; but Martinez is a man who has learned how to deal with frustration. He changed the name of his café from Dora's (when Dora divorced him, five years ago) to El 85 Chile Capital Cafe, and printed up business cards with the new name, but no one has paid any attention. "I don't give a damn what you call it,"

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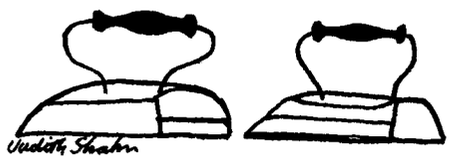
one customer informed Martinez. "It will always be Dora's. And it still serves the best chili in town."

Dora's is a typical New Mexican small-town café, which means that chili is on the menu three times a day—in bowls all by itself, as the essence of enchiladas, on top of fried eggs and hot tamales, and as the key ingredient of burritos, flautas, and tostadas compuestas. No meal costs more than seven dollars, and everything is served on heavy restaurant china, accompanied by paper napkins. It's the kind of place where the morning crowd is nearly all men, who are regulars and know one another, and where none of them look at the menu, because they know what they want to eat. The dining area is small, with eight mismatched tables, and with beige wood-panelled walls reminiscent of a mobile-home breakfast nook. The men who eat here are chili growers, and at eight o'clock in the morning their mud-caked cowboy boots reveal that they have already been out in the fields seeing what damage a week of rain and hail has done. As they talk about crops, weather, and farm machinery, Martinez moves among them with a metal pot of hot coffee.

We had ordered huevos rancheros, and they arrived on an oval platter with a heap of steaming rice at one end, next to a mound of refried beans with melted cheese on top. In the center of the dish was a helping of fried potatoes and some "chili meat"—either green chilies with diced beef or red ones with pork—and at the other end of the platter were the eggs themselves, with chili sauce, on a soft corn tortilla in lieu of toast. On the side came a big bowl of red chili, along with a stack of soft flour tortillas. The chili was spicy hot; according to the waitress, the level of the heat varies daily, depending on exactly which batch of roasted chilies has been used to make it. Though the chili was hot enough to make us sweat after a few spoonfuls, it wasn't so hot that we couldn't taste it, and the taste was what was remarkable. This chili is pure vegetable essence—a flavor experience virtually unknown outside New Mexico. It is not a meat stew or a bean stew, and it hasn't any tomatoes or bell-pepper chunks or *masa harina* or fat to thicken it or adulterate its elemental nature. It is a bowl of chilies and nothing but chilies: roasted, peeled, puréed, cooked, and then seasoned only enough to bring out the lush taste that distinguishes pods grown in this state from those grown anywhere else.

Along Hall Street, spectators were setting up folding chairs on the sidewalk and getting their cameras ready to take pictures of friends and relatives in the parade, which started to assemble in midmorning out on Franklin Street, near the Dairy Queen, at the north edge of town. The star of the parade, and of the festival, was the 1991 Hatch Chile Queen, Angelica Cuevas, who was sixteen and a junior at Hatch Valley High School. She was dressed in a frothy white gown and a red-satin sash, but would have to wait for her crown until a coronation ceremony was held at noon, when the festival officially opened, at the Hatch Municipal Airport, west of town. Meanwhile, she was attended by a large woman in a bright-red muumuu, who adjusted the tulle and satin of the royal gown and helped Miss Cuevas compose herself in the rumble seat of a lavender 1932 hot-rod Plymouth coupé, which was to bear her to the fairgrounds. Leading her retinue, just behind a five-man color guard, was a magenta 1947 Chevrolet carrying her attendants (and classmates)—the 1990 Red Chile Queen (dressed in pink lace over satin) and the 1990 Green Chile Queen (in a green metallic fabric). Before the motorcade got under way, we were allowed an audience with Miss Cuevas. She proved to be very shy, but as regal in demeanor as someone sitting in a rumble seat could possibly be. We learned that she was from a chili-picking family in the nearby town of Salem, and that she had won her crown by giving the most effective speech about chili at school.

The Queen and her court were followed by fifteen floats, nearly all of them with chili themes. The Ben Archer Health Center, whose staff includes a dentist, sent forth a flatcar with two of its nurses dressed like chili peppers—one red, one green, but both wearing pointy brown tam-o'-shanters signifying stems—and seated on white plastic stools supposed to resemble giant molars.



The float, designed to encourage good dental hygiene, won second prize. It was beaten out by a fanciful mobile rendition of a flour mill consisting of aluminum foil and empty hundred-pound flour sacks. The floats from the Friends of the Hatch Library and the United States Postal Service were both so good that they had to share third prize. The Post Office float was a ten-foot frying pan filled with balloon-waving Hatch youngsters dressed in green and red and also wearing paper caps that looked like the stems of chilies. On the side of the frying pan was the legend "Keep On Sizzlin'." For the library, Carol Portillo, a salsa singer and the parade's grand marshal, rode a decorated farm trailer surrounded by dancing children, as the rock-and-roll song "Hot Hot Hot" played through a loudspeaker.

By the time the parade arrived at the airport fairgrounds, the Chile Festival recipe contest was under way. Twenty-one cooks from Hatch and beyond had brought their entries to the airport between nine and ten that morning. There were dips, sauces, stuffed chilies, chopped chilies, cubed pork marinated in chili purée, and several casseroles—all set out, with a bunch of plastic forks, on a table under a big tent with enough wooden benches to seat at least a hundred interested onlookers. This year's judges, John and Stephanie Keepers, were chosen for the task because they have worldly palates and, besides, John Keepers, who is the chief of safety at the White Sands Missile Range, is a V.I.P. in these parts. Stephanie Keepers studied nutrition in school and now sells real estate. The Keeperses awarded the grand prize to Charlene Killgore's Marrvelous Chile Chicken Casserole, a homey cream-based dish with a benign shot of chili in it. One notable entry was a traditional salsa brought to the festival by Eloisa Mendez, of Truth or Consequences: like the red chili at Dora's Cafe, it wasn't complex or in any way exotic, but it contained ripe, flavorful tomatoes and confetti-size bits of onion, along with a squeeze of lemon juice, salt, and a sprinkle of coriander, which combined to bring out the full savor of the fresh New Mexico peppers. Citizens of Hatch, which calls itself the chili, or chile, capital of the world, probably eat these glorious chilies all the time, and so take such a salsa for granted, but if we had been

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judges we would have awarded it the blue ribbon.

On a table near the recipe contest, entries in the Best Dressed Chile contest were on display. For this one, ten-inch green or red peppers were dressed in hand-sewn doll clothes. The apex—the tapered blossom end—was used as feet, and the shoulder and base as a face, either with features painted on or with a red ribbon, a pearl stickpin, and round buttons applied as lips, nose, and eyes, Mr. Potato Head style. One pod was made up as a mermaid: its long, tapering apex made a fine fishtail. Another, with a bulbous walnut nose and a droopy Zapata mustache made of doll's hair, held a sign in its pipe-cleaner arms: "Welcome, Amigos, to the Hatch Chile Festival!" There was a dried red Elvis impersonator with tiny blue sunglasses, and a marriage tableau that had a fresh green pod in brown tuxedo and top hat, a wary look painted on his face, marrying a ripe red pod, in veil and tiara, who was grinning halfway around her circumference.

Of all the competitions at the festival, the most earnest was the chili-growing contest. It was judged by Dr. Paul Bosland, an associate professor of horticulture at New Mexico State University, in Las Cruces, and is the country's best-known chili breeder; his pickup truck has license plates that read "CHILEMAN." Bosland, who came to New Mexico in 1986 and has helped what had always been a small, regional crop become one of the star players in a national craze, has released several new ornamental cultivars, including three named Yellow Sunrise, Orange Sunset, and the Purple Centennial (the last marked New Mexico State University's hundredth anniversary, in 1989). In 1988, with a horticulturist named Jaime Iglesias-Olivas, he released a chili pepper with no heat at all, called the NuMex Conquistador; he has developed a tiny, very hot piquin pepper that can be shaken off the plant by a mechanical harvester (most chilies are still picked by hand); and he has recently created the NuMex Joe E. Parker (named after a field manager for the Old El Paso food company), a pod sized to allow the canning of seedless whole peppers. Bosland wasn't always a chili man. Before he came to New Mexico, his field was sauerkraut; as a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, he tried to develop disease-resistant cabbages, in order to boost production, but that was a thankless task. "Sauerkraut is a dying industry," he told us. "The Reuben sandwich propped it up, but only for a while."

Now Bosland is a chili booster. He helped establish a state Chile Commission to publicize the excellence of New Mexico's pods, which he believes are playing an important part in a major transformation of the American diet from bland to bold. As Bosland sees it, chili has boundless potential, beyond providing flavor thrills in food. He delights in enumerating all the medicinal uses of capsaicin, the active ingredient in capsicum fruits: as a treatment for shingles; as a salve for stumps of arms and legs after amputation, to eliminate phantom-limb pain; as a nearly miraculous analgesic cream for cluster headaches. (Rubbed into the temples, capsaicin induces an agreeable warmth that seems to distract nerve endings and thereby eclipse the throbbing pain.) In addition, capsaicin spray guns have replaced mace and tear gas in more than a thousand American police departments, for one shot of chili-derived Counter Assault to the face causes attackers to gasp and twitch helplessly for at least twenty minutes; and essence-of-chili sprays are also marketed in sporting-goods stores as protection against grizzly bears. Further, Bosland points out that as carcinogenic red dyes are banned, red chili peppers—natural, healthful, loaded with beta carotene—make an ideal source of food and cosmetics coloring, and are considerably cheaper to grow in some areas than their main competitor, beets. He and other breeders have worked on tasteless bright-red cultivars for just this purpose.

"Chili growers have to become McDonaldized," Bosland said. "They have to regulate the heat. Once that happens, we can move on to the rest—taste, aromatics, color. One day, we will be just like the wine industry: you will be able to taste a pepper and have a full vocabulary to describe it." At this early stage, however, the taxonomy of chili traits remains elementary: Bosland was able to describe the Mexican mirasol as "prunelike" and the Peruvian Ají Amarillo as "similar to green apples," and about the legendary habanero he said, "It has a lanolin taste to me."

To arrange peppers for Bosland's scrutiny, a table in the fairgrounds tent had been covered with red oilcloth, and the peppers—long greens, jalapeños, bell peppers, and piquins—were displayed on white paper plates. Bosland's job was not to taste them but to decide which peppers most closely fitted the standard of the breed. How firmly was the peduncle, or stem, attached? How meaty was the flesh, and was it smooth or corrugated? Was the color consistent? If he was looking at long greens, he checked the roundness of their shoulders and also their length: anything over six inches was unsuitable for canning. When he was considering bell peppers, he looked to see that they were four-lobed and properly boxy, so they could be stood on end for stuffing. When he made his decisions, blue, red, and white ribbons were awarded, and his pick of the crop was displayed for all to see.

Throughout both days of the festival, there was a drawing every half hour to award a lucky fairgoer a sack of fresh green chilies. But all those who came to Hatch during Labor Day weekend took at least a little chili home with them, even if they didn't eat any of the delicious bowls of red or green from the booths, or fajitas from the El Rey de las Fajitas wagon, or the chili meal prepared by the festival committee: it was impossible to come near the festival without inhaling, tasting, and actually absorbing chili through your pores, from the sweet smoke that wafted everywhere as chili men fired up their roasters all around the fairgrounds.

A FEW days before the Hatch Chile Festival, we had met Bosland in Las Cruces, where he does his chili breeding on five acres of land and in a greenhouse, both owned by New Mexico State. As we strolled through the fragrant experimental fields, among various plants under nylon netting (to prevent bees from cross-pollinating), Bosland explained his concept of a perfectly domesticated capsicum plant: one that ripens at a fixed and predictable time, with all its fruits in an even ring at a uniform level above the ground for easy harvesting, with sturdy flesh that withstands processing, and with good, clear color for eye appeal. Over lunch at Chope's, a café in the center of La Mesa which is favored by local chili growers, he couldn't contain his pride in the fact that many fast-

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food restaurants all over the country now serve fajitas, which include chilies, whereas onion rings—a better-known snack food—have never been a big franchise-food success. "Green chili beat onions to the fast-food market!" he said, adding that chili's newfound popularity was a result not only of new immigrants' bringing in their fiery cuisines but also of all Americans' growing interest in exotic and exciting flavors. When we broke into a sweat over Chope's green-chili enchiladas, with a fried egg on top, Bosland used our inevitably satisfying distress as an opportunity to explain that the heat of chili is all in the placenta, the fleshy interior to which the seeds are attached, and that its capsaicin is so powerful that it is detectable by humans when diluted to one part in a million.

The reason that people actually enjoy eating alarmingly hot chili is not only culinary masochism, Bosland explained. Capsaicin provokes pleasure as well as pain. According to scientists who have studied the effects of fiery food, a very hot chili sends the nervous system into a state of panic, and the brain reacts by flooding the distressed nerve endings with endorphins, which are the body's natural painkillers—a sort of friendly morphine. The sudden shot of endorphins is what transforms the pang of hot food into pleasure, and also what makes it considerably more tolerable after the first few bites. In fact, Dr. Frank Etscorn, a professor of psychology at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, in Socorro, has conducted an experiment in which he injected a chili lover with an endorphin-blocking drug after the subject had been happily munching away on pickled jalapeño peppers. After the injection, with no more endorphin to counter his pain, the chili eater went into sheer agony; furthermore, he no longer got any pleasure from the food. It appears that only the release of endorphins allows the taste buds to experience the actual flavor of the peppers; without them, the tongue can feel nothing but the burning.

"Chili makes you feel happy," said Jeanne Croft, who, as a marketing specialist in the Division of Marketing and Development of the state Department of Agriculture, serves as the liaison between chili growers and the public. She wasn't talking only about the endorphin effect. She likes everything about chilies: the taste, the cult, the culture—or, as she likes to put it, the whole enchilada. "Chili is good and good for you," she told us almost as soon as we sat down in her office, in the Department of Agriculture building in Las Cruces, just a few miles away from Paul Bosland's experimental fields. "In the last few years, interest in chili has mushroomed. It used to be a minor crop, and to this day the crop-reporting service of the Food and Drug Administration considers it too small to keep track of. I can tell you that in 1974 ninety-four hundred acres in New Mexico were devoted to the long green chili; in 1988, it was twenty-two thousand two hundred and ten acres; and in 1990 it was twenty-eight thousand seven hundred. I couldn't be happier. I feel like a kid at Christmas when I see all the excitement about this neat little vegetable." She paused to take a phone call from a woman who had roasted some chilies the night before, had forgotten to freeze them before she went to bed, and had left them on her kitchen table all night. She had been directed to Mrs. Croft to find out if she could still freeze them and, if not, whether they were safe to eat. No, Mrs. Croft informed her, they wouldn't freeze well—they'd break down—and no, she wouldn't recommend eating *any* food that had been left out all night.

It was Jeanne Croft and a group of her friends who, while eating dinner at La Posta, a native-foods restaurant in the old village of Mesilla, back in 1972, founded the International Connoisseurs of Green and Red Chile. Having grown up in Washington State, where people "made something called chili with pinto beans and a sprinkle of chili powder," Mrs. Croft was dazzled when she and her family arrived in New Mexico, in 1964, and first ate the real thing, in an Albuquerque restaurant. "My five-year-old daughter was spooning up salsa like soup," she recalled. "I had never even seen a chili pod in my life, but I fell in love with it right away." When she started working for the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, in 1976, chili was a small-time foodstuff—a poor relation to the state's better-known apple and pecan crops. The founding of the International Connoisseurs, which began as something of a joke, was an augury of chili's

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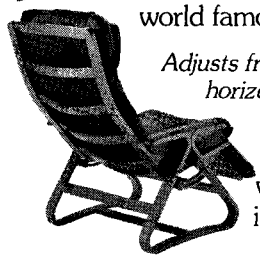

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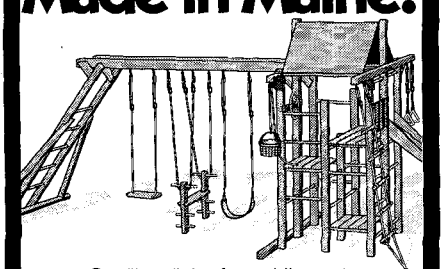

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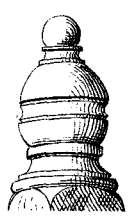

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ascension to the third most lucrative cash crop in New Mexico (after hay and alfalfa) and the trendiest produce in the country. More than seven thousand people have taken the pledge and become Fellows of the Pod.

Mrs. Croft takes great delight in disparaging the chili of every other state, and especially that of Texas. "Texas has nothing to be proud of when it comes to chili," she said. "Texas chili—and I can prove this—is greasy meat and beans with chili powder thrown in. I call that beef stew, not chili. In this state, when you order chili, chili is what you get: a red or a green vegetable." To Mrs. Croft, the whole idea of Texas is irritating. It is simply too big and too boastful—a land of spotlight-hogging blowhards who take a perfectly decent pepper and debase it in a bowl with things like beef and beans, and adulterate it further with beer, booze, and even shaved chocolate. As Mrs. Croft tells it, there is no end to the ignominy that decent peppers have suffered at Texans' hands. As an example, she told this story: "A person from the Texas Extension Service was on TV claiming that they had released a new chili. But in fact, *we* had created it. When they were asked to prove what they had done, they didn't even have any seeds!" She paused, leaned back in her chair, and said, "Well, I guess it beats war. Fighting over chili is a good thing to do."

Another thing that gets her goat: people who spell chili with an "i," like the International Chili Society, of California. To her, the "i" at the end is practically a sure sign that whoever spelled the word considers chili merely one ingredient in the kind of willy-nilly gallimaufry she despises. Despite what dictionaries have to say about the matter, she will allow an "i" at the end of the word only when the word is applied to unworthy stews of other states.

As a card-carrying Connoisseur (members get an ID with the chili pledge on the back to keep in their wallet at all times), Mrs. Croft has made it her business to search out those cafés and restaurants throughout the state which serve the best bowls of red and green. It was she who recommended Dora's, and also some green-chili cheeseburgers at the Owl Bar, in San Antonio, New Mexico. But the truth is that finding good chili in New Mexico is as easy as finding a good knish in Queens or a good Polish sausage in Chicago. New Mexicans define themselves and their cooking as a unique mixture of Native American, Spanish, and Anglo influences; and in this mixture, whatever the proportions, chili is axiomatic. You can eat it at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center Restaurant, in Albuquerque, served between disks of puffy fried bread with beans and lettuce and tomato and shreds of bright-yellow cheese—a configuration known in those parts as an Indian taco. You can have chili served take-out style to eat in your car at the Stop and Eat Drive In, in Española, where chili-topped Jumbo Twin Burgers are the meal of choice among the town's many Hispanic low-riders, who arrive in fantastic Truman-era Mercurys. You can get excellent green-chili-stuffed sopaipillas (triangular fried hot breads) at the lunch counter of the Duran Central Pharmacy, in Albuquerque. And if you want chili for breakfast, there are fiery egg-and-chili-stuffed burritos at Tecolote Cafe, in Santa Fe. For romantic chili meals served before a piñon-burning hearth in a gracious old hacienda, there is Rancho de Chimayo, in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, where the Jaramillo family, whose ancestors were among the first Spanish settlers in the territory, more than three centuries ago, prepare such venerable New Mexican standards as carne adobada, sopaipillas rellenos topped with red or green chili, and rolled corn tortillas filled with chicken or pork and fried crisp (known as flautas). Moreover, you can enjoy memorable chili as you stroll through the plaza in the center of Santa Fe: Roque's Carnitas Wagon, a street cart with a charcoal grill, is usually parked at the corner of Palace and Washington Avenues; its specialty is warmed flour tortillas loaded with sizzled strips of lean beef and a breathtaking fresh-jalapeño-tomato salsa. Even the Woolworth on the other side of the plaza is known for its chili—in the form of its delectably uncouth Frito pie, which is a slit-open bag of chips filled to the brim with red-hot chili, topped with cheese and onions, and served across the take-out counter with a plastic spoon planted in the center for easy feasting as you enjoy the sights of Santa Fe.

Santa Fe, the capital, is "the most foreign destination in the U.S.," according to one tourist brochure. The

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air, seven thousand feet above sea level, is crisp and thin, and the sky is immeasurably blue, bordered by mountain peaks where the Rockies begin. Around the plaza that once marked the end of the Santa Fe Trail, exotic beauty is everywhere. Under the portico of the Palace of the Governors (the oldest public building in continual use in the United States), Pueblo Indians in velvet blouses and turquoise-and-silver jewelry exhibit their crafts along the sidewalk and bargain with passersby; many houses along the city's meandering streets are made of tan adobe brick and weatherworn wooden timbers; some display sun-bleached cow skulls nailed to porch posts, and inside, their cool walls are hung with aboriginal rugs and lined with shelves of native pottery. As truly enchanting as all this is, it has made Santa Fe into a big tourist town (and helped make tourism New Mexico's second-largest source of income, after the extraction of oil and gas), into choice real estate for wealthy people who want second homes, and into a destination for many who have pulled up roots and want to start life anew. Santa Fe style has become a commodity both rigorously protected (by zoning laws) and industriously marketed; indeed, the profusion of such fashions as women's fiesta skirts, buckskin moccasins and designer cowboy boots, copious amounts of turquoise, and fringed frontier jackets has become such a cliché that it has inspired a popular gift-shop poster showing a woman in buckskin and turquoise lying flat on her back in the middle of an extravagantly appointed adobe house, under a caption that reads "Another Victim of Santa Fe Style."

One of the Santa Fe *objets* on which the woman in the poster overdosed is a carved wooden coyote with a gay red bandanna tied around its neck and with its nose pointed skyward as it bays at the moon. Thousands of such coyotes, carved from cottonwood or made of painted clay, or silk-screened on T-shirts and tote bags, are for sale throughout the city. This particular image, which first became popular in 1987, has become the preëminent Santa Fe cliché; and to some of the longer-tenured residents of the town it is a disturbing sign of overpopularity—of the endless hordes of visitors who stream through the streets pointing their video cameras in every direction and buying up heaps of gauche knick-knacks to carry home. O.J. Sarah's, a café favored by locals, sells a T-shirt showing the image of the howling coyote in a circle with a slash through it—the international nix sign.

Mark Miller, the proprietor and chef of the Coyote Cafe in Santa Fe, counted sixty-two Coyote Cafés across America the last time he looked. This is not a franchise, and, as far as he knows, none of the Coyote Cafés are related to one another; certainly none are related to *his* Coyote Cafe, which opened in 1987. For that matter, his coyote logo is different from the cliché. Designed by a Native American artist and trademarked by Miller in 1985, it is not the cute, baying coyote with a scarf but a mischievous dancing coyote playing a flute—the trickster and merrymaker from the mythology of the lost tribe of Anasazi Indians. The vast, airy restaurant, with its playful and sophisticated atmosphere, is a place where travelling gourmets come to experience what Craig Claiborne once called "perhaps the greatest Southwest cooking in the whole region." The Coyote Cafe is where the chili pepper has been most conspicuously elevated from local produce to a widely known symbol of a new American haute cuisine.

Miller, whose education was not as a chef but as an anthropologist with an interest in cross-cultural aesthetics, began his culinary career in the nineteen-seventies at Chez Panisse, in Berkeley, where he worked as a cook and a buyer; then he opened two Bay Area restaurants of his own—the Fourth Street Grill and the Santa Fe Bar & Grill, both of which were at the forefront of what restaurant critics see as a culinary renaissance in America. At the Coyote Cafe, he has tried to redefine New Mexican cuisine with similar panache, reaching back to pre-Columbian Native American cookery for inspiration, and using traditional ingredients to create modern dishes. At first, his innovations were scorned by some locals as the unauthentic noodling of a culinary dilettante, unrelated to what they, born and bred in the state, knew as their own. Miller recalls, "I told them I wasn't interested in what their grandmother cooked in the nineteen-twenties—I wanted to go back to twelfth-century Pueblo cookery."

Only a quarter of a century ago, New Mexican food had a fairly disreputable image as diner chow: cheap, filling, and crude. The top restaurants in Santa Fe, the Compound and the Periscope, were known among cognoscenti for their excellent Continental kitchens, which had little use for anything as vulgar as chili—whether as a stew, as a vegetable, or as a spice. In 1958, "Gourmet's Guide to Good Eating" recommended the Pink Adobe (still thriving) for its "atmosphere befitting old Santa Fe" and its menu of "French, Creole, and curry dishes," and made no mention of chili or any other local food on the menu. Miller compares the status of New Mexican food back then with the way

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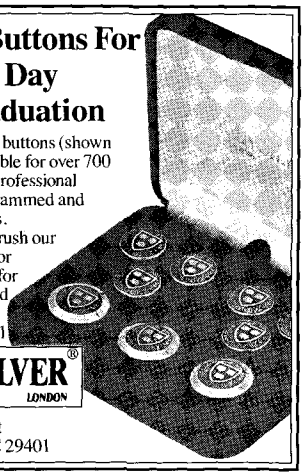

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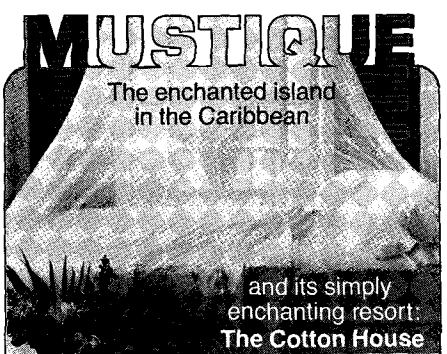

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people used to think of Italian cooking. "They called it nothing but pizza and spaghetti with red sauce," he says. "But then Italian was rediscovered—and that is what I would like to see happen to New Mexican food." Miller likes to describe much of what he cooks as an imaginative re-creation of what cliff-dwelling Native Americans might have eaten ten centuries ago—venison with ancho chili and prickly-pear sauce, for example, and goat leg baked in sage or a clay crust, and green-chili stew with posole. The meals he serves at the Coyote Cafe have played a big role in advancing the status of New Mexican food and making chili a vogue.

The success of the Coyote Cafe has encouraged other ambitious Santa Fe restaurateurs to create stylish New Mexican menus of their own. Interpreted by imaginative chefs using uncommon combinations of ingredients and a palette of spices in which chili is the dominant tone, this new New Mexican cuisine now not only is the cutting edge of food fashion around the nation but has become a prime tourist attraction in Santa Fe. In the dining room of the Inn of the Anasazi, you can eat such variations on traditional fare as sage-rubbed venison carpaccio, and green-chili duck hash with poached eggs on top; and at an elegant restaurant called Santacafé, in a hundred-and-eighty-year-old adobe house with a courtyard, Michael Fennelly, a graduate of the Parsons School of Design, has come up with what may be the last word in cross-cultural cookery, combining what he has called "Southwest simplicity and the refined minimalism of the Orient." The results are some flabbergasting food tableaux, so attractive to look at that they scarcely seem meant for eating. Santacafé specialties include maki rolls filled with smoked trout and chilies, rare-duck quesadillas with tomato salsa, and—to quote from one dinner menu—"Grilled Marinated Pomegranate-Rosemary Rack Lamb w/an Apple, Green Chili Demi-Glace & Shallot w/Green Chili Mashed Potatoes."

In the last five years or so, New Mexican food has been a big thrill for epicures in search of novelty, but for most New Mexicans it is simply what they eat. As newer culinary fashions sweep into the stylish restaurants of Santa Fe, you can be sure that Dora's Cafe will still be dishing out classic bowls of red, and that good green-chili cheeseburgers will be sizzling on the griddles of cafés throughout the state. And even if the national craze for Southwestern cooking wanes, as the craze for blackened Creole foods did a few years back, the chili pepper seems to have arrived for good, adding zest to the American diet. "It is a trend, not a fad," Paul Bosland said. "Chili is not going to come and go, like kiwi fruit. It is going to stay, like rock and roll."

Dave DeWitt, who has been a New Mexican since 1974 and, since 1987, the editor of a bimonthly magazine called *Chile Pepper* (circulation 70,000), says that chili's surging popularity in this country over the last two decades isn't due only to the influx of immigrants from places with peppery cuisines. He believes that it is also a result of the strange effect that chili has on people's feelings—beyond demographics, and even beyond its flavor. "Chili is something that is embraced by more than one sense at the same time," he says. "Another example is Garfield. He is a cartoon cat, a doll, a character from TV, and something you stick on the window of your car so you don't get lonely. People respond to him emotionally. Chili appeals to our senses of smell and taste, and sight, too. There are purple peppers, yellow peppers, red peppers, and light-green, orange, and dark-green peppers, and all the different shades in between. And they come in so many interesting shapes, from the boxy bell pepper to the long, ornamental Peter pepper—known to some botanists as the penis pepper, for its phallic shape. Their aroma, when they are roasted and peeled, signals the beginning of fall in New Mexico—as the smell of burning leaves did when leaf-burning was allowed back East. Also, they are such a part of the heritage and culture of the places where they are grown that their taste evokes all kinds of deep emotions. Chilies turn people on."

DeWitt, who used to be an advertising man in Richmond, Virginia, told us over lunch at one of his favorite fiery-food cafés, El Norteño, in Albuquerque, that his interest in peppers had been growing since he first ate real chili, when he came West. "That taste led to my increasing fascination, and to a compulsion for collecting information," he said. In the mid-eighties, he

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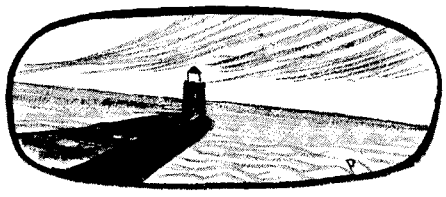
and a fellow New Mexican, Nancy Gerlach, wrote two cookbooks about hot and spicy food around the world, "The Fiery Cuisines" and "Fiery Appetizers"; then they decided to focus their attention on a publication devoted specifically to chilies. In 1987, they issued "The Whole Chile Pepper Catalog," which included names and addresses of chili farms, processors, wholesalers, and retailers; of sources for chili-related arts and gifts; and of distributors of chili seeds. In addition, the catalogue included a history of domesticated chili, a botanical description of the various species of the *Capsicum* genus, an article on growing chilies at home, suggestions for how to cool your mouth if you eat food that's too hot, and a small sidebar noting that the astronaut Bill Lenoir carried a bag of fresh jalapeño peppers on the space shuttle Columbia in November of 1982, and thus became "the first chili lover put into orbit with chili peppers." The catalogue concluded with a Chile Pepper Aficionado's Final Exam ("Of all the countries in the world located in the Chile Belt, which one's outline most resembles that of a dried chile?" Answer: Argentina). DeWitt and Gerlach intended to publish their catalogue only once a year; but its appearance galvanized a nascent population of chiliheads who wanted more. DeWitt recalls the moment he decided that it would be a good idea to transform the catalogue into a regular magazine: "A letter arrived in the mail asking about subscriptions, accompanied by a blank check."

Chile Pepper is fun to look at. It includes recipes for spicy dishes that can be made with peppers (not all of them four-alarm), articles on culinary history, listings of spicy-food fairs, reviews of restaurants that serve chili-seasoned food, and plenty of bewitching advertisements from small companies peddling pepper-related oddities, including "sirloin in a shuck," hot tamales from Texas, a personal chili roaster (x-foot propane hose included), and chili-pepper wind socks ("the hottest thing blowing . . . perfect for porches, decks, sailboats, condos, any place that needs a little spice"). One classified ad placed by a seed company in Redwood, California, with hot ones to sell begins, "Yeeeooooowwwwwwwwww!!!!!!" Silly as much of this is, there is an aspect of Dave DeWitt's chili mania which is downright scholarly: he has compiled a bibliography of some twelve hundred nonscientific capsicum citations—undoubtedly the world's biggest.

Not all the joys of being a chilihead in DeWitt's league are gastronomic. Once you get serious about chilies and begin to look for rare ones, it naturally follows that you cultivate a garden. (Where else would you ever find fresh sweet de aguas for your molé sauce or huachinangos to smoke and dry for hot red salsa?) DeWitt sometimes devotes articles in *Chile Pepper* to what he describes as "tracking down exotic and mystery peppers"—a geographical and historical quest shared by readers who have plots at home yielding as many as a hundred unusual varieties. DeWitt himself has about thirty varieties growing in his garden, many of them from little-known seeds sent to him by subscribers or by friends in university agronomy departments. When we met him, he was hot on the trail of an elusive pod called the malagueta, which has sometimes been described as coming from West Africa via Brazil. But DeWitt pointed out that "peppers are a New World crop, so the reverse must be true." "Look at Bahia in Brazil and see how close it is to West Africa," he said. "It is a short span across the water. Could it be that seeds of South American chili peppers were taken across to West Africa by birds and then, during the slave trade, brought back to Brazil?" Another mystery developed when DeWitt learned that there was another kind of plant, related to ginger and called the grains of paradise, that has a very pungent, pepperlike berry known as the malagueta. Fortunately for DeWitt, one of the readers of *Chile Pepper* has a plantation on an island in the Amazon and sent him some seeds collected there. "They grow wild on the island, and I am told they are known as malagueta," DeWitt rejoiced. "I'm growing them. They are just flowering now, and I will finally be able to see what the wild malagueta really looks like."

Dave DeWitt and his wife, Mary Jane Wilan, are the producers of an annual event called the National Fiery Foods Show. They began it five years ago, so that restaurateurs and shop owners could see what's new and available for sale in the world of hot food. This year's show, advertised in *Chile Pepper* under the headline "MELTDOWN," was held in Albuquerque's big, modern Convention Center the second weekend in February and was open to the public as well, and it drew amateur chili fans from New Mexico and beyond, curious to taste the latest in lip-blistering sauces, marinades, condiments, jellies, powders, and newly cultivated pods. Some five thousand people came to the show, a three-day event, and that was a big gain over the previous years—especially since the first Fiery Foods Show, held in El Paso, where, one exhibitor told us, "you could have rolled a bowling ball down the middle of the convention floor at noon and not hit a soul." In fact, this year's show was so popular that several booths ran out of food on Saturday, leaving their proprietors with nothing but brochures and good will to distribute on Sunday.



Chuck Evans flew to this year's Fiery Foods Show from Powell, Ohio, so he could exhibit the Montezuma Mexican Recipe hot sauces and salsas he makes and distributes to about three hundred and fifty specialty stores in the state. From what Evans told us, even Columbus, Ohio, famous as the franchise-restaurant center of America, is ablaze with a passion for hot food, which, he believes, results partly from an influx of Asians and Latinos but can also be explained by the fact that "people are just tired of eating bland—hot is more fun." His Jamaican Jerk Marinade was a finalist at the summer fancy-food show in New York last year (jerk seasoning is a powerful blend of chili and other spices that was developed in Jamaica originally as a meat preservative but is now used in cooking, for its flavor), but he lamented that most other food shows are a closed society, limited to corporate giants. Evans sees himself as the little guy, in contrast to the big national producers of hot foodstuffs, like Old El Paso and the McIlhenny Company, whose products get prime shelf space in every supermarket. His interest is still a personal one, and he told us that he loves to collect jars of other people's salsas. He tastes the sauce, then saves the jar, and he now has a collection of between nine hundred and a thousand different kinds.

A few booths away from Evans, the Hamilton family were spooning samples of their Evadney's All Purpose Jamai-

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can Hot Sauce onto crabmeat-laden tortilla chips, cooking one-inch frankfurter segments in more of the sauce, and setting out the food on trays for the public to sample. Their table also held a bowl of utterly scorching pickled-pepper sauce—Evadney's Old Fashioned—made, like the All Purpose, from the Caribbean habanero, a little lantern-shaped pod that is considered to be the world's hottest pepper and is eaten whole only by the most foolhardy chili extremists. Francis Hamilton is a native of Belize, and his wife, Maureen, was originally from Jamaica; they and their three teen-age sons drove to the show from their home, in California. The Hamiltons' hot sauces are based on family recipes that use Scotch-bonnet peppers grown by Maureen Hamilton's brother. They brought a plastic bag full of the peppers to display next to their sauces: knobby little pods in red, green, and yellow that didn't look at all diabolical. But Scotch bonnets, the essential ingredient of all Jamaican jerk sauces, are torrid—similar to habaneros, with a weirdly sweet, smoky smack—and they helped make Evadney's Old Fashioned one of the most compelling products in the show. By early Saturday morning, as word of its incandescence circulated among fairgoers, the line of hot-food fanatics waiting for a taste stretched far back into the aisle.

Most people who brought products to the Fiery Foods Show weren't satisfied with merely taking orders; this was a convention of true believers, who tended to evangelize with the kind of enthusiasm that only hot peppers and, on occasion, chocolate can provoke. Seree Sullivan, offering tastes of Trinidad Pepper Sauce, said, "People who are doing drugs should learn about peppers, because it is a better rush." Stan Gauthier, a lawyer who came from Breaux Bridge, Louisiana, to show off his Static's Barbecue Sauce and other Cajun condiments, said that hot food had saved him from the sorrows of his profession. "All lawyers are a bunch of shit-asses," he said as he offered tastes of black-edged beef brisket, smoked over mesquite, steamed with apple juice, and flavored with his secret sauces. "Now that I am in the hot-food business, I don't have high blood pressure anymore and my hair is starting to grow back." Julie Applegate, a tall, artistic-looking woman from Grand Rapids, Michigan, was marketing a line of hot products under the label Mrs. Dog's. The name was inspired by her ten-year-old golden retriever, whose photograph, displayed at the booth, showed a distinguished bitch wearing three strands of pearls. Mrs. Applegate, who appeared to be in strapping good health, talked about the therapeutic powers of the chili pepper; she said that she suffered from chronic-fatigue syndrome but when she ate hot peppers she had an abundance of energy.

Jeff McFadden came from Grand Junction, Colorado, with a supply of his Religious Experience hot sauce. Part of the charm of Mr. McFadden's product is its exceptional taste; another part is his style of marketing. The labels on the jars of Religious Experience, which comes in four strengths—mild, original, hot, and the wrath—offer a strange tale of a vision McFadden had, which inspired him to spread the sauce. ("The first thing I remember was wandering aimlessly on the Sonoran Desert. . . .") What's not on the jar can be read in *The Zealot*, a hot-sauce newsletter he puts out, which also includes bogus lovelorn personal ads, excellent recipes for hot food, and real and concocted news stories on subjects ranging from George Bush's homeless policy to the fact that all four levels of Religious Experience sauce are now available at the Toot-N-Moo grocery store in Lourdes, Wyoming. McFadden said he got into the hot-sauce business five years ago by setting up a card table at a local crafts show and selling his sauce, which he had been making each Christmas to give to friends. He believes that the success of Religious Experience comes from the use of tomatillos in the recipe, and also from what he enigmatically refers to as "a different spice arrangement." He finds most competitors' sauces gratuitously hot, which is not to say that Religious Experience is in any way meek. Heat is necessary and is good, McFadden said, for the strange bodily rapture it provokes. "There is something about breaking into a hot-food sweat that makes you feel a certain way," he explained. "You get hot, you get high, you get a real buzz."

Richard Reiher, of the Virgin Islands Herb & Pepper Company, was selling heat, pure and simple. Tiny, two-ounce cylindrical glass jars, lined up in a row with a sign that said "Take Home the World's Hottest Pepper—$5," were filled with a paste of Scotch-bonnet habaneros. The jars were identified with utilitarian labels, unadorned by amusing pepper pictures or colorful images of neotropical parrots or swoony prose: just plain type spelling out the name ("Jamaican Scotch Bonnet Habanero Paste"), a short list of ingredients ("peppers, vinegar"), and the address of his company (Box 9519[illegible] in St. Thomas. To offer customers a taste, Reiher had opened a jar and a box of wooden toothpicks. He suggested touching the tip of a toothpick to the paste, then touching it to your tongue. When he was asked, he did tell casual passersby that this was the hottest thing they would ever eat, but he said it without a hint of braggadocio, and he seemed more comfortable when he was talking with the few really serious chili-pepper connoisseurs who stopped by for a taste and a discussion of the paste's effect. "Sometimes when it hits your stomach, massive gas bubbles start," Reiher said. "You break out in goose bumps and start shaking." When he was asked what possible use such an unbearably hot concoction might have, he suggested putting half a teaspoon of it in a gallon of salsa. "But be careful," he warned. "The longer it sits, the hotter it gets." Reiher is new to the food business; his former field was nuclear weapons.

Pat Harrison, a postal worker from Eugene, Oregon, came to the show to sell Mayan Gold—chocolate truffles with chili-flavored centers. Inspiration had visited him one night when he was eating hot salsa and developed a powerful thirst. He recalled the moment: "I went to the refrigerator for a beer, but the only thing I could find was chocolate milk. With my mouth still on fire, I drank it. It was fantastic! Then a lady friend who had an Aztec grandmother told me that chocolate and hot peppers were an old standard." As fairgoers passed his table, he asked, "Would you like some hot chocolate?" He was doing great business, selling more boxes of Mayan Gold—and of similarly flavored Southwest Coyote Kickers and Mexican Zingers—on the first day of the fair than he had all last year. Sitting in a folding chair under a sign that said "The Most Unique Product," and occasionally donning a Halloween mask of a coyote to engage

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the passing crowd, he said, "The Mayan calendar is based on thirteen, I was born at 10:13 in the morning, I always get unexpected money on Friday the thirteenth, and the thirteenth is my lucky day." A couple of spectators asked Mr. Harrison what the number thirteen had to do with his good luck selling candy on February 7th, 8th, and 9th at the fourth Fiery Foods Show, and he said, "I don't know. I don't know how thirteen has anything to do with this."

In the swirl of buying and selling and eating and gasping for relief at the Fiery Foods Show, a small green plant in a white plastic dime-store pot sat on a folding table. It was in the booth of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics of New Mexico State University, and it was being chaperoned by Paul Bosland, who had also brought display boxes of Heet, Axsain analgesic cream, and Sloan's liniment (all made from chili), and packets of New Mexico State-bred pepper seeds to give away to home gardeners. The plant was a tepin. It had tiny white flowers and nearly microscopic pods hanging on its leafy stems, but it wasn't colorful or dramatic in any way—more like something assigned to the corner of a luncheonette window to add a touch of homey cheer. "I feel like the only sane person here," Bosland said as he looked away from the tepin plant toward all the commotion. "I guess I'm the only one not selling anything." For free, to those who were interested, Bosland told all about his plant and why he had brought it to the show: it was the wild plant from which all domesticated chili plants had descended, the founding father of capsicums. He grew it from a seed delivered to him from its homeland, Guatemala, he said, and he was utterly thrilled to have a pot full of fundamental genetic material. Few people paid the tepin's small green pods much attention; still, it was nice to see the gentle-looking ancestor in bloom, quiet and undisturbed, as all around it the convention hall echoed with the yelps, gasps, and howls of chiliheads feasting on its progeny.

—Jane and Michael Stern

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[*Adv. in the Daily, newspaper of the University of Washington, Seattle*]

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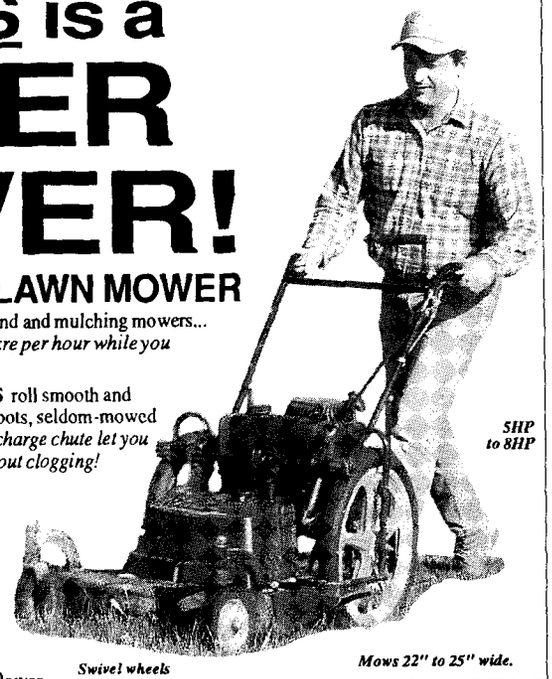

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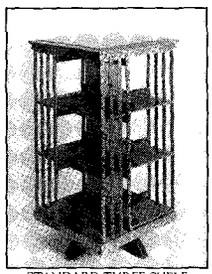
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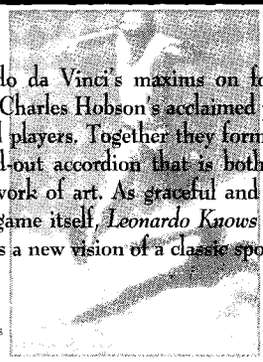

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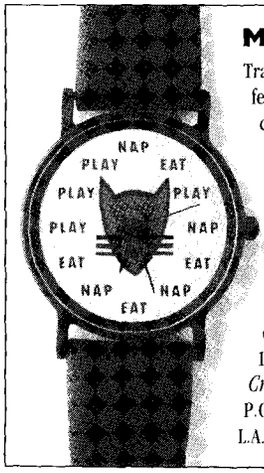

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DANCING

Spring

WHEN we call a work of art classical, we imply that it is made of perennial stuff. And yet dance classicism is immensely fragile. *That* was "Divertimento No. 15"? You should have seen "Monotones" when it *was* "Monotones." We cannot know how much will survive for future generations or for our own old age. In terms of creative talent, this is the worst recession ballet has endured since at least the thirties. What a tonic, therefore, to go back to an era when ballet classicism was being defended, restored, rebuilt, and intensified—to the forties. American Ballet Theatre opened its current spring season with a program including "Theme and Variations," which George Balanchine created for the company in 1947, and a newly acquired production of "Symphonic Variations," which Frederick Ashton made in 1946 and which for more than thirty years was a signature work of the Sadler's Wells—later Royal—Ballet.

Balanchine's classicism pours forth in all its majestic power in "Theme and Variations." The ballet takes us from the fountainhead's first eruption to the surging torrent of the river mouth. It keeps proclaiming "Petipa!" with a high-density brilliance way beyond that of Petipa's own ballets. In 1947, Russia, France, and Britain posed major alternatives to Balanchine's vision; in 1992, there are no challengers. New ballets everywhere have "Balanchine on My Mind" stamped all over them. This is right and proper; Balanchine was the towering genius of his art. But it is time to insure that Ashton—who was merely a great choreographer—is not eclipsed. Ashton, only eight months younger than Balanchine, was the first major choreographer to take inspiration from Balanchine's ballets, to use it in his growth as an artist, and, in several ways, to dissent. As "Theme and Variations" and other works show, Petipa is often the only choreographer in Balanchine's view of classicism. In "Symphonic Variations," however, Ashton's view takes in Petipa, Balanchine, and more. For that reason, among several, its presence in the A.B.T. repertory refreshes the springtime climate of ballet at Lincoln Center. And spring, by the way, is part of its theme.

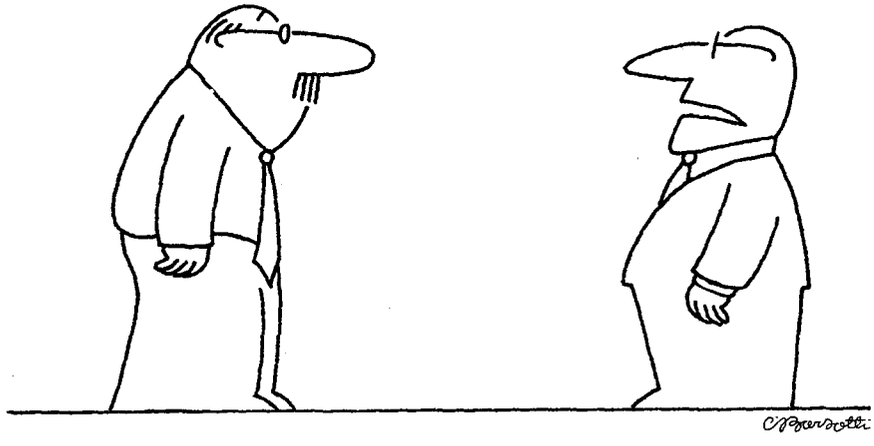
Ashton's classicism had its peculiarities. Ballet is urban, and his was often Arcadian. Ballet is hierarchical, and his inclined to egalitarianism. Ballet is sexist, and his gave parity to male and female. Ballet is movement, and his often featured an unusual degree of rest. (Not that Ashton's classicism was markedly eccentric—it was no more peculiar than Bournonville's, and less so than most others'. It is the grand orthodoxy of Petipa and Balanchine that is truly rare.) Naturally, Ashton interpreted classicism in the light of his own temperament, and in the light of his place and time. I cannot imagine that even Balanchine could have produced the unchecked continuity and reinvigorated tradition that shines through "Theme" if he had spent the war years in Europe. In the work of every European artist in the forties we can feel the threat that the war posed, how close it came to shattering accepted traditions, and how profoundly and permanently it altered European life. "Suite en Blanc," made in occupied Paris for the Opéra by its director, Serge Lifar, is classicism as sheer façade or couture. The elegance that it defiantly proclaims is not expressive; it's defensive, a shell. "Symphonic Variations," made in London immediately after the war, is classicism as haven.

The war elicited a new, expressionist streak in Ashton, who had previously tended to choose frivolous or sentimental themes as the seeds of his brilliant constructions. His most famous ballet of the war years was "Dante Sonata." What would we make now of its conflict between the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness? Or its two tableaux of crucifixion? Well—it was loved once. The war didn't rob Ashton of humor; the one dance of his that survives from those years is the hilarious Foxtrot that he added to his 1931 hit "Façade." The tension between his new seriousness and his more familiar frivolity is caught in a passage from Margot Fonteyn's autobiography:

> One night, in our theatrical lodgings, over cold meat, apple pie and hot tea, Fred Ashton announced that he was going to read the Bible from beginning to end, and that by the time he finished it the war would be over. Finding some passages monotonous and heavy going, he made a further announcement: he would read it aloud to us. Billie Chappell protested, saying: "Freddie, you can't do that to your friends." Nevertheless, Freddie did, but he miscalculated by about four years, and was to read a great many other books before the holocaust ceased.

That further wartime reading included, Ashton said, "lots of mystical books, St. Theresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and so forth." He also listened repeatedly to the Symphonic Variations of César Franck.

Ashton's ballet to this score began in his mind as another expressionist work. The music's progress was to have taken the ballet from winter to summer, from darkness to light, from chastity and vigilance to love, fertility, and marriage. But working on "Symphonic Variations" taught Ashton something like what Stravinsky's score for



"It's simple enough, Langdon, but I'll explain again. To help pay off the debt that we incurred when we bought this company, we've sold some of you into slavery."

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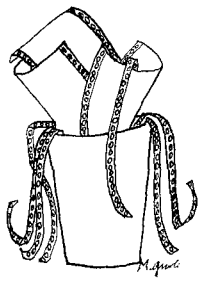
"Apollo" had taught Balanchine in 1928: to eliminate. Ashton pared subject matter away until only pure-dance essence remained. Consequently, by suppressing the many things he originally meant to say, he made a ballet that says far more. It is easy to feel how "Symphonics" takes its place in the line of English lyric poetry. Its dances, to use Milton's (and Mark Morris's) terms, are both allegro and penseroso, active and contemplative. The ballet's pastoral spirit is like Marvell's garden: "Annihilating all that's made To a green thought in a green shade." And its quiet mysteries are those of Keats's Grecian urn. "Symphonics" is also near in spirit to Eliot's "Four Quartets": "the still point of the turning world," "in my beginning is my end," "the time of the seasons and the constellations." The ballet is both Hellenistic and English; it refers to the perpetual stillness of Greek statuary, to the expressive vitality of pure geometry, to the chain dances of the Greek and medieval eras, to the flowing arabesques and attitudes and the glowing tableaux of "The Sleeping Beauty," to the white virginity of "Swan Lake," to the primitive footwork and extreme oppositions of Nijinska's dances, and to the creative union of male and female in "Apollo."



Above all, "Symphonics" is a Vitruvian ballet—an exposition simply of how pure dance to music, without props or scene changes, can radiate from the area of space onstage into the larger, taller facing arc of an auditorium. In 1946, Ashton was obsessed with Covent Garden. The old theatre, which had so often presented Russian ballet before the war, was now, for the first time, the home of British ballet. "The Sleeping Beauty," with which Covent Garden reopened, was a Russian ballet that he had helped to make English and to make register to the depths and far distances of the opera house. And "Symphonic Variations" was the first ballet of his own in which he continued that process.

Six dancers are standing onstage when the curtain rises, small at first against the verdant expanse behind, and they remain onstage throughout. Their stance—arms calm by their sides, one foot crossed over and resting on its point, head turned toward one shoulder, eyes lowered—is the most characteristic motif of the whole ballet, and it shows a facet of classicism usually ignored by ballet: repose. Upright, the body is relaxed and harmonious. The orchestra calls out metrical figures in brief phrases, and the piano calls out quietly the main theme of the music, like a roll call of the original cast's names ("Margot *Fon*-teyn . . . Moira *Shear*-er. . ."; then "Michael *Somes;* Brian *Shaw;* Henry *Dan-ton*"). Though Franck quickly embroiders variations on the theme ("and *Pam*-ela *May*"), he keeps returning to devout announcements of it. The three women, plotted in a row along the front, dance first, to the first piano statement; and their chaste unison—arms often crossing over the body's center in drastic lines—represents the winter of Ashton's original conception, as they dance to and fro along the stage's horizontal foreground. It is the central man who brings the spring. Turning to face us, he slowly advances through a series of piqué fourth positions, raises an arm, and holds a long, limpid gesture that aims past and above the women's zone into the theatre's heights.

The quartet that follows is the ballet's main reference to "Apollo" (3f, 1m), but the relations of male and female are not Balanchinean. When the two other men start to move, from sentinel positions in the stage's rear corners, they stretch their arms to the audience and then open them out, as if parting curtains and letting in new light and air. All this has a sense of ritual. The movements are still tied closely to the music's phrases. Gradually, as the dance grows more complex, it also becomes musically more surprising. You see lifts and jumps that correspond to no audible beat, and a unison standstill while a trilling musical crescendo begins. Though the sense of ritual never quite evaporates, the dance shows an accumulation of spontaneity, even of ecstasy. Many moments shine out, like the second male dancer's multiple pirouettes in the center of the stage: in passé, he starts to turn like a gyroscope, with one arm curved above his head, and then he arches back and continues to turn in renversé. (This is the most elusive step in the ballet. With A.B.T., Wes Chapman came closer to bringing it off ideally than anyone I have seen

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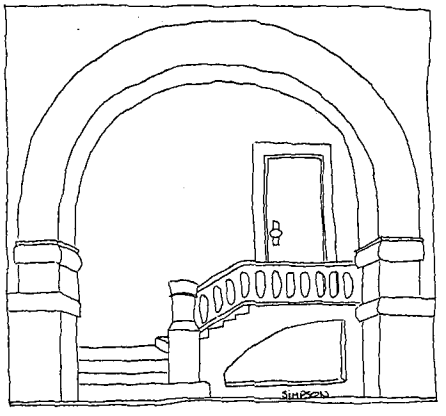
in years. The renversé can make you feel as if the world had briefly spun off its axis.) Or like the highest and most jubilant of all the lifts: the central ballerina is high in the air and fully extended in écarté when suddenly the piano adds its acclaim.

That American Ballet Theatre now dances this ballet is in several ways remarkable. In his lifetime, Ashton allowed no foreign company to dance it. Perhaps as a result, at Covent Garden it became enveloped by the same Holy Grail aura that has blighted many companies' accounts of "Les Sylphides" and "Apollo"; and during the last ten years of his life it died (died standing up). Since his death, the Royal has not revived it. But, to much British surprise, Michael Somes—long the chief régisseur of the Ashton repertory—has staged it for a European and now an American company. A.B.T.'s performances, light and free, are the best "Symphonics" has seen in fifteen years. As was to be expected, it does not read perfectly in the vast, hangarlike space of the Met—no ballet does—but it is an ideal work for teaching A.B.T. dancers how to make a dance breathe into the house and how to shape a serene dance phrase to the music. It teaches much else, too: to keep the waist pliant and the base of the neck Praxitelean. And it asks for line, line, line. Academic steps and positions find their perfect resolution in the address of the eyes, the angle of the head, the gentle opening of the hands.

The A.B.T. version lacks something in sculptural detail, focus, and (Ashton's word for this ballet's essence) breath. There are, however, numerous gains. The ease of the women in pirouettes frees the ballet from an element of strain it often had at Covent Garden, and the combination of upper-body fullness and precise unison in the two side women (in the first cast, especially) lightens the whole work. In the central role, Christine Dunham has the greater poise and more expressive head positions, but in phrasing and plastique I prefer Cynthia Harvey. "Symphonics" is no longer exclusively a British ballet. The warm glade-like green of Sophie Fedorovitch's backdrop is now as much New England as it used to be Arcadia or Ashton's Suffolk. Too bad A.B.T. scheduled only four performances at the Met, and, worse, put them in a block at the season's start. If you were out of town from April 20th to the 22nd, you missed "Symphonics."

In the mid-sixties, Ashton made "Monotones," the pair of pas de trois to Satie music that have long been international currency. "Monotones" is Ashton's ultimate distillation of his personal classicism. It takes the old British mastery of flowing adagio to its purest form. And it refers to "Symphonics," to "Apollo," to "La Bayadère," and to Greek imagery. It does not, however, efface "Symphonics," which is, in some ways, its opposite. All Ashton's plotless works are, in a broad sense, ballets d'action; each one carries a specific sense of time, place, and character. Both parts of "Monotones" are encompassed by darkness; one thinks of the Stygian gloom in which the "Bayadère" Shades scene begins, and of the surface of the moon. "Symphonics" is danced in sunlight. Though Sophie Fedorovitch's décor, with its grand parabolas running across the green backdrop, is the most abstract that Ashton ever employed, the choreography always makes you feel that these dancers are people in a pastoral landscape. And whereas "Monotones" is daringly sustained in a single slow tempo, "Symphonics" is bright with internal contrast. Its movement is almost all in various kinds of allegro moderato, and is repeatedly set against the motionlessness of one or more dancers.

Sometimes it is the dancers at the center who scarcely move or are still, and the dancing passes around them. At such points, you sense the pattern of suns, planets, and moons—what A. V. Coton, reviewing the original production, called "an imagery of infinities." One of the features—first seen in that opening female trio—that most remind me of "Four Quartets" is the way the dancers look ahead, then behind. Late in the ballet, the women—



backs to us—cross the stage and, just as they step into piqué arabesque, looking forward, they turn to look back; then the men, jumping in second, do the same. This alternation is at its most heart-catching in the brief pas de deux. The leading man carries the ballerina in a soft circuit of floating lifts around the stage ("the enchainment of past and future"); in one she is looking ahead, in the next behind. There is no suggestion of regret. Simply, you sense contemplation even in the midst of action.

I owe this ballet much. Eighteen years ago, it formed the centerpiece of the first program of ballet I ever saw at Covent Garden; and it was this and "The Sleeping Beauty," as they were performed there in the seventies, that first addicted me to ballet's radiant legibility. Sitting far away, I would feel how extraordinarily those dances filled the theatre, beaming forth with affecting kinesthetic impact. Had my early dancegoing occurred in this city, I would surely have learned a similar lesson from Balanchine. On my first evening in New York, in 1979, I watched "The Four Temperaments" from standing room at the back of the New York State Theatre's fourth ring, and felt, more forcefully than anything I had ever encountered in dance, the vast projection of power zooming out through space like an electric charge. Interestingly, "Symphonics" and "The Four Temperaments" were both made in 1946. Radically different, they have both enlarged the world of ballet.

"Theme and Variations" came at the end of seven years in which Balanchine was choreographing with astonishing assurance—astonishing even if you know his earlier masterpieces, "Apollo" and "Serenade." A number of his forties ballets—from "Ballet Imperial" and "Concerto Barocco" to "Symphony in C" and "Theme and Variations"—set before you classicism as an entire city-state. It has palaces, avenues, parks, arbors, halls, and arenas. Private and public lives are seen in moving alternation, chivalry is in flower, time past is alive in time present, and pennants wave proud in the breeze. (In 1948, he was at last able to give the city-state a permanent identity, and name it New York City Ballet.) Ashton dancers address space and dance through it; Balanchine dancers command space and illumine it. For Ashton, the acad-

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emy is a source bubbling just beneath the ground. For Balanchine, the academy is both spring and river; in "Theme and Variations," he is demonstrating academic dance at a peak of intensity. Again and again over the years, he told dancers in the classroom that tendus were the key to everything; his ballets say that in other ways. Think of the girls at the start of "Serenade" just after they have turned out into first position; the corps around three sides of the stage in the finale of "Symphony in C" (while the ballerinas pirouette center stage), as if at the barre; and the boy Prince in "The Nutcracker," whose tendu is the ballet's great gesture of transformation. In "Theme," it is the ballerina and the leading man whose tendus start the ballet. From this fount—which summons up the minuet and Aurora and her prince in "The Sleeping Beauty"—the ballet cascades.

While "Theme" began A.B.T.'s season, New York City Ballet opened, the same week, with "The Sleeping Beauty," in Peter Martins's staging, new last year. The children in Balanchine's Garland Dance have been recostumed to good effect, and the Christening's six fairy variations are now tolerably fitted to the music. The production's great test has not yet come; that will happen when dancers now in the corps or school ascend to leading roles. (But when will that be?) A pity that the staging shuffles through the Christening adagio as if this great classical ensemble—which can be the ballet's highlight—were mere preamble. And the diminuendo ending of the birthday scene is horridly rushed. Martins's text not only honors Balanchine directly (the Garland Dance) and indirectly (the Jewel pas de quatre) but also nods in passing to Ashton. In the Vision-scene solo, Aurora's battements raccourcis alternate between large s es and small, precisely as they do in Ashton's 1952 version; and, also as in Ashton, her arm descends—to match each large raccourci—as if veiling her face. Then Martins goes on to something different. That's tradition for you—all made up of memories, borrowings, and emendations. The Diamond variation in Martins's Jewel divertissement—set, perversely, to the Sapphire Fairy's music—winks at Ashton again. As the music starts, the soloist bursts up in pas ciseaux—a step from the Fairy of Joy solo that, to this same music, Ashton added to the ballet in 1968. (The music is in 5/4, rare in nineteenth-century ballet. Ashton originally choreographed his version for Georgina Parkinson, and he told her to cope with the unusual metre by saying "Rim-sky-*Kor*-sa-kov; Rim-sky-*Kor*-sa-kov" in her head.) Would that in this case Martins had stolen more. Instead, the solo goes on to flamboyant and crudely debased (School of Watts) Farrellisms. Alas—this, too, is tradition. You turn from the Vision solo to the Diamond/Sapphire one in perplexity: which is the omen?

To Balanchine and Ashton, "Beauty" was what "Apollo" has been to later generations—the most influential of all ballets. A famous Ashton story is that when friends used to catch him at a matinée of "Beauty" and ask him why on earth he was watching something he knew so well, he would reply, "Having a private lesson." Is that what Martins will do with his "Beauty"? In A.B.T.'s new "Peter and the Wolf"—on the same program as "Symphonics" and "Theme"—Michael Smuin has learned nothing, but he has cribbed plenty. His cat and bird are glib ripoffs of Petipa's "Beauty" Wedding divertissement. But his stage action tells the story badly, the accompanying narration (spoken at some performances by Georgina Parkinson—now A.B.T.'s ballet mistress) is both fake-cute and condescending, and Prokofiev's young-person's-guide-to-the-orchestra score is wretchedly overlaid with cheap animal noises. There have been stagings of "Peter" superior to this. The great one, however, is not on any dance stage but part of "Make Mine Music," Walt Disney's sequel to "Fantasia." When the music tells of the wolf's approach, all we see is its huge prints. Then, suddenly, the screen is filled with nothing but its face, glaring into the camera. Later, it opens its huge mouth and lays its vast tongue out like a red stair carpet, leading from the ground up into the huge pillared hall of its mouth. The little bird Sasha, briefly concussed amid his antics, stumbles right up and in. "Make Mine Music" comes from 1946. Quite a year.

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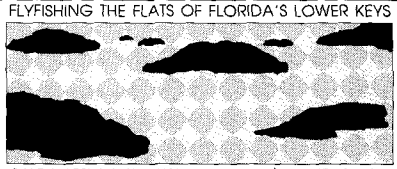

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BOOKS

Nobody Gets Away with Everything

THE late Manuel Puig—he died in July of 1990, in Mexico, at the age of fifty-seven—was, like his fellow-Argentines Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges, and Adolfo Bioy Casares, a tricky writer. His first love was the cinema, and he took up writing, in the mid-sixties, while employed by Air France in New York, only after years of disappointment and frustration as a would-be film director in Rome, Paris, and Buenos Aires. In his prose, he generally abjured the third-person descriptions of scenes and faces with which other writers ploddingly assemble their realities; he presented dialogue unbroken, and varied the stream of talk with documentary matter like letters and police reports. He directed, as it were, the flow of material, but remained in his authorial persona invisible and unheard; he left the storytelling up to his characters. And tell stories they do: the hero of "Kiss of the Spider Woman" regales and seduces his cellmate with the detailed plots of old movies; the daydreaming interior monologuists of "Betrayed by Rita Hayworth" seamlessly blend their narrow lives with the films they've seen. The two elderly sisters at the heart of Puig's last novel, "Tropical Night Falling" (translated from the Spanish by Suzanne Jill Levine; Simon & Schuster; $19), living together in Rio de Janeiro, share aloud not only their memories but lengthily circumstantial gossip concerning the romantic doings of a forty-six-year-old psychologist, Silvia Bernabeu, who has been confiding in the younger sister, Luci. Puig's characters desperately want to tell each other things, and this narration is a product of the universal need to form attachments, however inadequate and destructive they prove to be. His world is a dark and harsh one, lit only by the thousand guttering candles of persistent human romanticism.

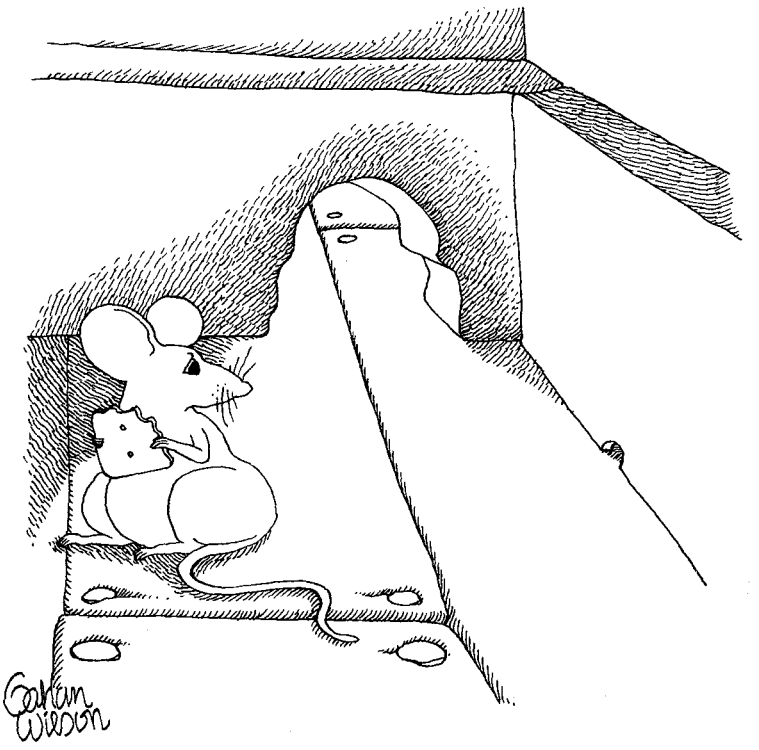
The circumstances of "Tropical Night Falling" emerge slowly from the early chapters of pure dialogue, the separate utterances punctuated by, instead of quotation marks or dashes, those little uplifted periods called bullets:

• A husband is one thing, Nidia, a daughter is another. Your daughter. What a thing to happen, how awful.

• Luci, I don't want to be inside, let's go out for a walk.

Luci, at the age of eighty-one, is the less vigorous; six years before the novel's events, which occur in 1987 and early 1988, she left their native Buenos Aires for the warmer climate of Rio, after the death of her husband, Pepe. She has two middle-aged sons, Luis and Ñato. The dialogues take place in her apartment, whose address is Rua Igarapava 120, Apartment 104. Nidia, upon the death of her daughter, Emilsen, at the age of forty-seven, has come for a prolonged stay. Back in Buenos Aires, she has a fifty-year-old son, known to her as Baby, as well as a son-in-law, Ignacio, and four grandchildren. The two sisters discuss their health (Nidia has high blood pressure, Luci often seems tired) and their past (they remember Mama fondly), and with much tongue-clucking follow the erotic vagaries of Silvia as she pursues an elusive, sad-eyed widower named José Ferreira. He reminds Silvia of an earlier lover, Avilés, and appeals to her "professional deformity," which is to want to know everything about people and to heal them. Silvia has a son, a nineteen-year-old studying graphic design in Mexico, and, it turns out, a number of casual but not totally inattentive lovers. Ferreira, for that matter, has a mistress from his married days, whom he reactivates as a wife substitute, which suits Silvia, according to Nidia—by this time herself something of a psychologist—since "now [Silvia] has the role of the mistress, the third side of the triangle, which is the best role, with the least commitment, and from her position she's going to continue to help him resolve his problems."

It cannot be said that untangling these threads from the word-tumble does not test the reader's patience, or that Puig's reproduction of banal conversation always avoids, in its fidelity, wearisomeness. But he lays so coherent a ground beneath his drifts of talk that we trustfully persevere, and he varies his devices enough to keep us entertained. Rather enchantingly, early in the novel, as Luci and Nidia at last settle into the silence of sleep, the book's text becomes Luci's bedtime reading, a rousing parody of popular Sunday-supplement journalese, and with increasing ellipses and some deliberate repetitions the text takes us right inside Luci's drowsily reading brain. As the story complicates, Puig lets his web of geriatric gentility and sheltered gossip be invaded by rougher realities—those of crushing urban poverty and of death. While Luci is off visiting Ñato in Lucerne, Switzerland, to which he has recently moved, she dies of heart failure. Through an omission that gathers its own momentum, Nidia is left uninformed, and keeps



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mailing chatty sororal letters off into the void—a grim joke reminiscent of a Cortázar short story of twenty years ago, "The Health of the Sick." In Luci's absence, Nidia proceeds to invite into the apartment the "gorgeous" doorman of the neighboring apartment building, Ronaldo, and Maria José, the precociously beautiful thirteen-year-old nanny of her downstairs neighbor, and Ronaldo's wife, Wilma, who is stuck in the drought-stricken north. Before Wilma can arrive, Ronaldo and Maria José, apparently pregnant by him, disappear, and are pursued by the girl's wrathful brother Otávio. These events transpose "Tropical Night Falling" into the dry but straightforward texture of police reports, and send Nidia back to Buenos Aires, having learned her lesson: "I can't trust that kind of people."

"That kind" are the desperately poor—poor but still willful and sexually lively. Manuel Puig moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1982, after living for nearly twenty years off and on in New York City. He was evidently struck, like his two heroines, by Brazil's abundance of poverty. "So much misery in such a rich country!" Nidia exclaims. Urban refugees from the country regions, people like Ronaldo and Maria José, are virtually homeless, sleeping in tiny corners, in closets and machine rooms. Ronaldo, who is on duty at night, during the daytime finds space to stretch out, amid the racket, in a building under construction. In this same half-completed structure, the bricklayers, "all of them short and kind of ugly" because "they're almost all from the North, where people are shorter," hold squalid orgies with visiting women, "usually young maids, also from the North, who feel very lonely." After a night of aquavit and being passed from man to man, these women are turned out in the morning as soon as the buses start to run; in a pages-long letter to the deceased Luci, Nidia reports, "It's difficult to make th m leave, they don't want to, because they're very sleepy, and have drunk so much and slept so little, but the men take them out like bags of garbage to be hauled away."

Puig knew sorrow. In his childhood, by his accounting, only the movies relieved the provincial tedium. His homosexuality was isolating in the lands of Latin machismo. As an exile, he went from city to city, finding work as a dishwasher in London and in Stockholm. Silvia, who though a psychologist herself is prey to demeaning attachments, writes Ñato, "Sometimes I can't understand how people put up with so much pain and disillusionment." When at last informed of Luci's death, Nidia frames a stoic epitaph:

> That's how her life was, with its good moments and its bad moments. More or less like everybody's, nobody gets away with everything. A pity that Luci often had the sensation that it was another woman, not her, who had lived the good moments.

Though both elderly ladies scoff at the afterlife ("The only thing I ask God," Luci says, "is that if there's another world I don't want to be left alone there. But after this life there's nothing, luckily"), they forgive this belief in others. When Wilma in a letter pours out her faith in seeing her dead baby daughter in the next life, Nidia excuses "these ignorant people from the North" in a letter to her sister: "Maybe it's their poverty more than their ignorance. Since they've got nothing at all, they have no choice but to invent those illusions. I envy Wilma that." The novel concludes on a hopeful note, with an act of reckless selflessness. Nidia, just short of eighty-four, yields to Silvia's urging to return to Luci's empty apartment in Rio de Janeiro. In the plane, she steals a blanket, presumably to keep Wilma, or another adopted unfortunate, warm.

Puig's final novel, though sketchy and short, shows a humane breadth. His vision is tragic but merciful. Considerable psychological insight—he is one of the few postmodern writers who tried to learn from Freud—shapes the distorted strategies his needy characters follow, as love, in low forms and high, strives to relieve the oppressions of society and nature. Ugliness is comprehended as, possibly, a stage of growth: Nidia's grandson Gilberto has lost to adolescence his baby face, "such a perfect little face it was, and now it's all swollen, the nose is like a red pepper. . . . If there's anything I'd like to live to see, it's how he ends up as a little man, with his own face." Behind Puig's clinical record of our babbling pathology stood a vision of health.

MARTIN AMIS's recent novel, "Time's Arrow" (Harmony; $18), also concerns human suffering, but somewhat more programmatically. The son of Kingsley Amis, he has inherited his father's wicked wit but on

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his own has developed experimental literary proclivities and an agitated liberal conscience. His book of five science-fictionish short stories, "Einstein's Monsters" (1987), opens with a thirty-page polemic on the fact that nuclear weapons exist. Of Robert Jastrow, whose book "How to Make Nuclear Weapons Obsolete" committed the offense of considering some possible nuclear-war scenarios, Amis writes:

> He is wrong, and in this respect he is also, I contend, subhuman, like all the nuclear-war fighters, like all the "prevailers." The unthinkable is unthinkable; the unthinkable is not thinkable, not by human beings, because the eventuality it posits is one in which all human contexts would have already vanished.

The idea that one's humanity can be forfeited returns in the short stories: of two drunken murderers it is said, "Really the hardest thing was to touch them at all. You know the wet tails of rats? Snakes? Because I saw that they weren't human beings at all." This convenient category of the less than human—invoked by righteous propaganda at most of the high moments of twentieth-century massacre—ominously fascinates Amis: Nicola Six, the death-minded loose woman of his long novel "London Fields" (1989), I take to be one portrait of an inhuman human, who has flunked humanity as Amis defines the subject, and Odilo Unverdorben, the hero of "Time's Arrow," is another. Listening to public radio in my automobile, I heard Amis explaining to an interviewer that—as best I understood—the narrator of "Time's Arrow" is Unverdorben's soul, which he gave up through his heinous actions as a doctor in various Nazi concentration camps. Why this ousted soul has been directed and empowered to traverse Unverdorben's life backward, from death to birth, with every journey, action, and conversation experienced in reverse, I didn't hear explained, alas. Perhaps I had to stop for gas, or the driver behind me was leaning on his horn.

Amis's ambitious concerns with inhumanity, time, and the unthinkable converge in "Time's Arrow," a work of impressive intensity and virtuosity, albeit bristling with problematical aspects. "Holocaust" has taken on two meanings in our time—nuclear war, which hasn't yet happened and we hope never will, and Nazi Germany's systematic murder of six million helpless European captives, most of them Jews. This Holocaust did happen, yet remains, like the other, unthinkable. That the German people, whose arts and sciences and industry stood in the forefront of what was proudly called European civilization, could be led into the commission of a crime so massive and wanton, so savage and yet so conscientiously executed, presents a monstrous riddle in the center of the twentieth century. Even though documentation, thanks to German efficiency, abounds, and though a context of German demoralization and European anti-Semitism can be explicated, the mystery remains, so awesome that fictional attempts to render it more thinkable generally give offense. Leslie Epstein's "King of the Jews" was thought to be scandalously lighthearted; William Styron's "Sophie's Choice" made some readers queasy with its mixture of thoroughly researched historical horror and adolescent sexual confession by the American narrator; even so deep and refined a thinker as George Steiner struck, I thought, too playful a note in his "Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.," relaying the arguments of a raving Hitler discovered alive in the Amazonian jungle in the nineteen-seventies. The Holocaust, a half century later, is still not to be played with; it still gives off a poisonous heat, and perhaps none but those who actually endured the camps, like Primo Levi and Tadeusz Borowski, should be licensed to make art of them. But, of course, the artistic conscience rebels against any such prohibition. One salutes for its daring this attempt, by an Englishman born in 1949, to abandon his mastered London milieu and enter empathetically into the life of a German born in 1916, trained as a doctor, destined to perform dreadful duties at Schloss Hartheim (where physical defectives were eliminated) and then Auschwitz, and permitted by fate to escape to Lisbon and thence to America, where he eventually dies at a ripe age of heart failure, surrounded by other doctors.

One wishes for more empathy, however, and a plainer payoff for the multiple technical difficulties of unreeling a life in reverse. Conversation, for example, arrives backward, so that "How are you today?" comes out as "Aid ut oo y'rrah?" Transcription so faithful is soon abandoned, but the only way to read extended dialogues (and there are several) is to flip ahead to the end and read up the pages. Eating and defecation are grotesque in reverse, we are more than once reminded. Smoke sinks, and fire creates. Blows heal, and doctors working in a hospital emergency ward appear to be ripping off bandages and inflicting tortures. Prostitutes pay the client; pens turn letters into blank pieces of paper; clippings leap up from the trash and rejoin the fingernails. A familiar ordeal like getting a cab in New York City becomes hilariously pleasant:

> This business with the yellow cabs, it surely looks like an unimprovable deal. They're always there when you need one, even in the rain or when the theaters are closing. They pay you up front, no questions asked. They always know where you're going. They're great. No wonder we stand there, for hours on end, waving goodbye, or saluting—saluting this fine service. The streets are full of people with their arms raised, drenched and weary, thanking the yellow cabs.

But the forward arrow of time is so deeply embedded in the syntax of the language and our habits of narration that Amis at moments appears to slip. Of abortions: "A rectangular placenta and a baby about half an inch long with a heart but no face are implanted with the aid of forceps and speculum. . . . The full bowl bleeds. Next, the digital examination and the swab. They can get down now, and drink something, and talk in whispers. They say goodbye." Wouldn't they—the again pregnant women—say hello, at the beginning of the visit, which from our perspective is the end? At that passage of his life when Unverdorben (now given the American name of Tod Friendly, a designation as bothersomely cute as his German name, which means "unspoiled") is compelled to flee New York for New England, we read, "I'm on a train now, heading south at evening," when strictly it should be "*backing* south," like the ship that brought him from (takes him back in time to) Europe:

> All the people tended to gather at the sharp end of the ship, looking at where they came from, as people do. Only John [John Young, Unverdorben's first American name] is invariably to be found on the stern, looking at where we're headed. The ship's route is clearly delineated on the surface of the water and is violently consumed by our advance.

It is a mind-fraying exercise to read

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this book, and writing it must have made much mental labor. Even if the time reversal is not perfectly done, who else could have done it at all, with such colorful smoothness? Amis is an unusual English writer in that he has tried to learn from Americans, especially Bellow, with his quick demotic rhythms, and Nabokov, with his compressed metaphors and avid eye. When Amis is at home, as in his London novel "Success" (1978), his hyperactive language and seething choler are irresistible. Energetic images speed the path of "Time's Arrow," from an American hospital ("We the doctors move between ceiling and floor, between striplight and the croak of linoleum") to Portugal ("The villas loom pink and yellow on the arid land, like sweetshops on the planet Mars") and on back to wartime Berlin ("the drizzling parquetry of the streets, the shoplights like the valves of an old radio"). The existential frame of Amis's fiction seems American: he writes of "the deep and uncrackable code of the stars" in our local tone of frustrated transcendentalism. The large American section of the novel, which comes first, has a racy freshness of impression that suggests the world of "Lolita" seen in a crazy inverting mirror, with the same hollow sense of "America's pretty pluralism" and damnable plenty.

However, "Time's Arrow," when it arrives at its moral center, Auschwitz, somehow misses; even the reverse sequencing goes limp and halfhearted. Unverdorben, in the defining role of his life, becomes vague; all he seems able to tell us is that he has become impotent with his wife, Herta. The unthinkable murderous tumult around him is seen through squinted eyes, a black-and-white newsreel that keeps breaking. Perhaps Amis, to keep this fraction of his hero's life in proportion, hurried. Perhaps, entirely dependent here for vivifying detail on the accounts of others, he chose to borrow sparingly. (Primo Levi's books supplied, at the minimum, the name Unverdorben and some excremental details.) This reader was nagged by a wish to read the factual book by Robert Jay Lifton, "The Nazi Doctors," of which Amis in an afterword says, "My novel would not and could not have been written without it." Facts loom over the fiction: Auschwitz covered fourteen thousand acres, Hungarian Jews were killed at the rate of ten thousand a day.

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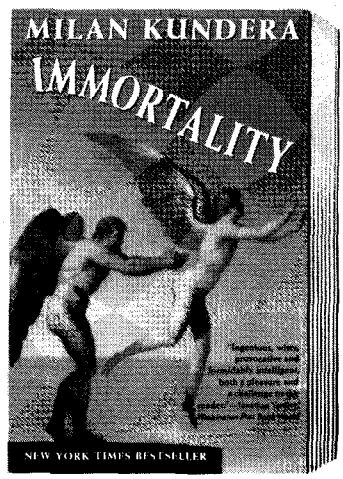

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Perhaps the subject is indeed too hot, too huge, to handle. Live Jews being conjured, by the reversed arrow, out of ashes and mutilated corpses, with their gold teeth being pounded back into their mouths, is not the cosmic comedy the author might have had in mind. The general human wish to undo the Holocaust—to have it unhappen—was given oddly moving expression in the scene of posthumous mass healing in D. M. Thomas's "The White Hotel"; the reader did not rebel against it, because it arose so spontaneously, so lightly, so organically out of the ground of grief and horror prepared by Thomas's earlier dramatization of the mass murder at Babi Yar. Our wish for denial was met by a whim of fiction and the old dream of a redeeming afterlife, not by a never explained mechanism in the telling that races ruthlessly on.

For who is this "I" who enters Unverdorben's mortal story at the moment of his death and harries him backward into his mother's womb? In the beginning, though coterminous with its physical host, the alleged soul sounds quite jaunty and detached (and English): "Life is no bowl of cherries. It's swings and roundabouts. You win some, you lose some. It evens out. It measures up." The ghostly voice complains of Tod (German for "death": another jab from the frisky author) that he has no feeling, that he "can't feel, won't connect." It sprinkles him, in the heyday of Tod's, or John's, American promiscuity, with little lectures in favor of monogamy and respect for the contents of women's heads, but allows in a sexy parenthesis, "You'll get no argument from me there: women *are* great." The "I" may think it is Tod's exiled soul ("Perhaps Irene puts it best . . . when she tells Tod that he has no soul. I used to take it personally, and I was wretched at first"), but to me it sounds like a hectoring author scolding one of his characters for being subhuman. Though Amis presents his hero as full of guilt—underestimating, I would guess, our human capacity for adamant self-justification, not limited to German war criminals—he permits him hardly a thought or deed that would encourage sympathy to work its way in. Unverdorben's truly unspoiled youth—pre-Auschwitz, pre-Reserve Medical Corps, pre-Hitler—has an impenetrable brevity. His mother is an American, and his father a crippled veteran of the First World War, a "sallow-fleshed skeleton," "as thin as a *Muselmann*." (*Muselmann*, meaning Muslim, was concentration-camp slang for a terminally damaged prisoner.) In young Odilo scarcely a glimpse of a decent boyish normality is allowed. His (and his soul's) rapturous lust for Herta inspires a prose poem: "Herta's body gossips with youth. Her ears are like cookies, her teeth are like candy. Her flesh is as taut as the flesh of an olive." But before we reach this joyous honeymoon vision we see her bedraggled and indifferent and Odilo impotent and death-soaked and, before (after) that, abusing her with sadistic sex games, between spells of going out and "helping" (hurting) Jews.

Well, there's no denying that much pain and cruelty disfigure human history. It is commendable that Martin Amis, or Unverdorben's alienated and garrulous soul, wants to gaze upon "the face of suffering. Its face is fierce and distant and ancient." But "Time's Arrow" seems less to witness suffering than to enact the primitive ritual of casting out a devil. This is not I, says "I" of Dr. Unverdorben. This is not you and I, says the moralizing author—this craven complicity, this violence born of the wish to succeed, this rapacious sexuality, this hard-heartedness, this driving fear. But it *is* we, surely, however fortunately far history and social circumstance have placed us beyond the reach of our worst selves. To comprehend the perpetrators of Auschwitz as fellow human beings is a step toward Auschwitz's not being repeated. Devil theories do no good, in politics or in psychiatry. With its fiendish ingenuity, "Time's Arrow" feels a bit like an old-fashioned inquisitor's device, designed to extract, under torture, a saving confession from a lost soul. The novel seems, with its cloudy and flirtatious metaphysics, to long for the cleansing old absolutes. It seems, flashily, to propose a fresh investigation, but comes up with no new evidence.

—JOHN UPDIKE

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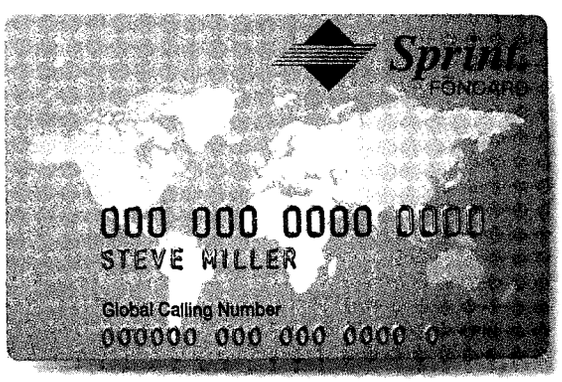

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